

plus

FINDING THE COURAGE TO START AGAIN

ARTFULLY CURATED ARTICLES

BOOMER

SUMMER 2021

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*Childhood on the Farm
Memories of the Outer Banks
Three Weddings and a Farmhouse
The Mountains Are Calling
Becoming a Step-Grandmother
Herbicidal Tendencies
Old Dude Social Media Strategy
And more!*

SUMMERTIME, PASSAGES, & LAUGHTER

From BOOMER Readers

CULINARY TRAVEL

*The Viennese Sacher Torte
Dairy Market Food Hall and Shops
Wool Factory Weaves History with Food + Drink
Camp Trapezium Brewpub and B&B
The Italian Reverence for Food*

RECIPES TO TRANSPORT YOU

*Jamaica – Bob Marley Cocktail
Philly – Cheese Steak Soup
North Africa – Mediterranean Grilled Salmon
Spanish Seville – Espinacas con Garbanzos
Florida – Tangy Key Lime Bars*

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NAVIGATING BOOMER'S DIGITAL EDITION

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ON THE COVER

"Summer will end soon enough, and childhood as well," said George R.R. Martin, author of *A Game of Thrones*. We fondly remember both, and learn from both. This issue of BOOMER magazine presents memories of childhood, summer, and other high points of life. Plus food-focused travel and travel-focused food.



RECIPES TO INSPIRE TRAVEL

Dishes that will transport your senses

The Bob Marley Cocktail: Rastafarian colors and Jamaican flavors

Philly Cheese Steak Soup: Popular Philadelphia flavors in a bowl

North African-Style Grilled Salmon: Mediterranean on the grill

Espinacas con Garbanzos: Spanish Seville with a Moorish touch

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FINDING THE COURAGE TO START AGAIN

A four-part series by Rev. Dr. Brenda Walker on
adults pursuing encore careers

Memories from a Childhood on a Summertime Farm

By Sonya S. St. Jacques

Fond nostalgia of grassy bare feet and never-ending days



Summer days are endless in the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountain empire. I grew up in a small county. 382 square miles of rolling, fertile, pastoral plateau; 3000 feet above sea level. The light in the winter is a blessing and in the summer? Near everlasting.

Mornings began early and barefoot. Toes were icy with dew and wet grass unless you could successfully catch a horse to round up the cows; keep your feet off the ground; smell his mane and feel his warmth. Steer him out of the shadows and into the low hung, fog laden rays of day. Earth smells mingling with gurgling creek chatter and the cloudy, heaving breath of the large, large animals. Dirty knees bumping bovine rib cages from the back of my saddle-free charge.

The sun was a lazy riser. It seemed to draw its curtains in its own sweet time on those chilly mornings. Languishing in the east, conserving its warmth. A backdrop to the measured movement of the livestock, the horse, the boy swinging a stick, imaginary engine noises and explosions emitted extemporaneously under his breath as he trudged up the path to the barn behind the wayward heifer.

THE DAYS OF A SUN THAT SEEMS NEVER TO SET

Milking. Twice daily. Early because there was much to do between each session and more to do in the evening. Because the summer days were endless.

There was warmth now that milking was done. Bare feet felt at home in the silky, pyrite flecked clay near the dairy. Mud sequins. The sandy loam in the bottom sloughed the heel and found sanctuary between the “go to market piggy” and the “stay at home piggy.” Creek was still cold but the sun was beginning to creep across the morning into a more radiant vantage point.

Tractors. Engines with souls. Flywheels that spin in tangent to power the man and his equipment. As valuable as gold, as cantankerous as any mule. Their voice signaled the real progress of any endless summer day.

You could walk with the tractor. Watching as its elephant wheels bump through the grass. Left hip deep, right hip pull, front end bounce, the driver engaged over both shoulders, standing often, adjusting and readjusting the throttle, stopping completely to change the gear and lurch forward. Long strides through longer grass shooping dogs from its path and pulling wild flowers to smell and discard.

THE CHAIN

There was a permanent fixture on the back of our Ford tractor. The logging chain. He lay perpetually draped on the hitch like an itinerant boa constrictor. Secured only by his own weight, immobile until heaved, thrust and coaxed into action. There were hooks on both ends. I never understood why. If you needed “the chain” it seemed that you had only to lay him in the proper place on the summoned object. All submitted handily to “the chain.”

There was a larger chain. Longer and heavier that hibernated in the beds of trucks or near the front of the hay wagon. This was the big chain. He laid immobile mostly. He needed sobering up and a good rust rattling by two strong boys before being deployed. But he was always there. The big chain.

Warmer now. Cirrus clouds. The sky whitening, the sun climbing. There were fences fixed. Barns painted. Hay downed and gathered. Tobacco suckered and hoed. Beans picked. Rocks piled. Wells dug. Roads created and graded.

A BOY IN THE ROAD

That sun hung in the sky. Hung there. A breeze would pick up. Milking was done.

My parents had us in the truck as children. It was late on an endless summer day. The four of us were grimy, dusty. I am sure we were en route to a neighbor’s and I am equally sure Daddy had a cold Dr. Pepper in his sights. The dust from the truck’s wheels billowed as we drove along the dirt roads. Our day was nearly over. That sun was a couple hours from his way out; there were some decent shadows by now. We rounded a curve.

He had slim shoulders and a wiry strength about him. One of the straps of his bib overalls was swinging loose at his waist and he was shirtless. His arms were brown with dirty white rivlets of dried sweat. There was a weariness in his gait. A bend in his shoulders. His right bicep was distended and the sinew in his right hand strained at his sternum dragging the chain that was channeled between his shoulder blades and snaked out into the dusty road behind his bare feet. He swung his blonde head around and raised his left hand in a “Howdy.” He smiled. Dropped his gaze. He must have been fourteen.

My parents slowed the truck and looked at each other for a long time and then looked at me and my brother. We all waved.

From my memory, I think it got dark at ten o’clock that night.

I saw the chain in the carriage house last Saturday. I have never forgotten the boy on the road.

Fourth of July: Memories & Life Lessons

By Michele Minott

‘Every kid’s fantasy rolled into one’



The Fourth of July on Rockaway Beach was every kid’s fantasy rolled into one.

You got to stay up with all the grownups, as, before your eyes, the beach turned into a carnival. Street vendors appeared selling an endless array of goodies. Cotton candy, Cracker Jack, popcorn, ice cream, and piping hot slices of pizza were the order of the day. Then there were glowing, long- stemmed, obligatory Fourth of July paraphernalia called “punks,” that when waved in the air created the illusion of writing. Sometimes we’d hold the punk between our fingers, pretending we were smoking a cigarette.

Lining up with our parents for a front row seat along the heavy iron chains and posts delineating the boardwalk’s edge, we kids would sit on the crossbars, propped up by our dads, punks in-hand, scribbling our initials with our pretend cigarettes burning brightly.

“Cracker Jack! Cracker Jack?” I begged, seeing Cheryl and some of the other kids chomping merrily away.

“We just bought you a punk,” my mother frowned.

“I know, but Cracker Jack is FOOD,” I pointed out, emphasizing the word to make the distinction between mere entertainment and nourishment vital to the health and well-being of every young child.

“Well, food or not,” my mother reasoned, “it’s all coming out of one budget.”

“It’s okay,” my dad smiled, “Just this once. I caught a ride home with Jack and saved the extra train fare.”

My mother chuckled, shaking her head. “You two! All right. Just this once, for a special occasion.”

The magic of fireworks – and family

Then all fell silent, as overhead the fireworks burst before us. Shooting up like a fountain of gems in the sky, dripping sapphires, emeralds, and rubies. Then falling to earth and fading away, as new colors lit up the heavens. On and on and on it went, filling parents and children alike with a sense of excitement and wonder. Then all at once it was gone. The curtain came down, as weary children fought sleep from their eyes, and dads carried them on their shoulders.

“Pony ride?” I asked, looking up at my dad.

He shook his head. “It’s been a long day.” Then, seeing my crest-fallen face, amended, “Half-way, and that’s my best offer.”

I agreed, and he hoisted me up to the sky, where I happily perched on his shoulders.

Slowly, my mother, my dad, and I threaded our way through the crowd, down the street that led back to Mrs. Moss’ cottage rentals.



A Good Humor ice cream truck, 1966. Image from GRUBBXDN, via Wikimedia Commons

The Good Humor ice cream vendor was there, and a throng of children assembled. “I’ve got a twin stick,” Cheryl bragged, as I slid down beside my father.

I could see my parents deliberate, as I watched and waited in silence. “You’ve had a lot of sweets tonight,” my mother was quick to point out.

A lesson of this Fourth of July from a kid’s perspective

“Now if you were to share some with your parents,” my father added, smiling.

Before I could get a single word out, Cheryl broke into a mocking little chant: “Baby! Baby! Has to share with her Mommy and Daddy!”

Pretending she wasn’t even there, I turned to my parents. “That’s okay,” I said with a smile. “I’m too tired for ice cream anyway.” Then, kissing each of them on the cheek, I whispered, “Goodnight,” and headed up the porch stairs to our second floor apartment.

“I can stay up as late as I want!” Cheryl called after me.

“No one was speaking to YOU,” I replied pointedly, over my shoulder.

All at once, another voice broke through the night air. “CHERYL! You come home right now!” called her visibly angry father. He’d stepped out on the porch of their shabby gray shingled cottage, in time to observe her outburst.

“I don’t have to!” she challenged. “Mom said I can stay up as late as I want. And you can’t MAKE me!” she added, hands on hips.

By then her father had heard quite enough and, striding right up to the street where she stood, scooped her up under his arm like a parcel meant for mailing. Red-faced, arms flailing, she kicked and screamed, as my stunned parents looked on in silence. The rest of the neighborhood looked on too, observing from their porches.

From inside the screen door of Mrs. Moss’ cottage, I could hear her scream, “I’m gonna tell Ma!”

“You DO that!” her father shot back, his sharp voice slicing through the still July night, like a razor blade through butter.

The grandmas assembled on the front porch shook their heads, pursing their lips, knitting needles loudly clicking their disapproval.

Whatever glee I might have felt at the public toppling of Cheryl was soon overshadowed by the realization that her bravado and pushy ways were a lot like those of her family. A family that seemed not to care at all that their quarrels and discord spilled into the street from their front porch and open windows.

The grandmas would whisper words like “common” and “crude” whenever their voices erupted.

My envy of Cheryl’s independence soon evaporated as I thought of my own mom and dad, who were patient and fair when enforcing rules, and treated each other with kindness.

Though the ice cream would have tasted good, and staying up late was exciting, I decided I liked my own parents better than hers, and that was more important.

Michele Minott is a Brooklyn born baby boomer who grew up in the '50s and '60s. Her parents cultivated in me a love of the arts. “Singing and writing gave me the comfort, clarity, and sense of empowerment I didn’t always find in life,” she recalls. “I even got to have the last word!” Minott has shared other nostalgic essays with Boomer readers: “Rockaway Days,” “The Sweet Shop,” and “The Charity Show.”

The Legacy of the Boomer Train

By J. Howard Rock



The legacy began in May 1957, with two boxes of rough cast iron undercarriage parts for a 7-½ inch gauge backyard railroad. A three-unit train required six four-wheeled trucks. These, with working couplers, meant 72 parts to be drilled and finished for assembly.

Three-fourths inch plywood in a 1-inch angle iron frame made the engine bed. On this 12' x 44' platform, I put a small gas engine, drive shaft with brake drum, speed reduction gear and final drive chain sprocket. I made the operating mechanism for a child operated go and stop automatic system.

A T-bar extended up out of the engine cab. A push on the T-bar opened the throttle, released the spring-loaded brake and the centrifugal clutch engaged the primary V belt drive. If the T-bar was pulled or released the engine brake grabbed, the clutch released and the motor idled.



The plywood engine I designed to resemble a C&O railroad diesel engine, including their blue and yellow colors. A black coal gondola car and a bright red caboose followed. The construction took a year of spare time. For railroad ties, treated, 12" 2 x 4's were used. The rails required 600 feet of 3/4" x 3/4" T-shaped steel bars fastened to the ties with roofing nails. This made 300 feet of track circling our backyard pine trees in Sandston, Virginia.

Finally the word was out, and the fun began. Cheryl, my niece and her two siblings lived next door to us, with our two boys. A dozen kids on our street added to the eager

riders waiting their turn on weekends, the trains' regular operating days. At suppertime, the kids left; all but Cheryl, who usually ignored several calls. There she would sit, holding the T-bar, going around and around until the call got serious. She drove the train more than any other kid. "Cowboys and Indians" was still a great theme then. Cheryl remembers our sons, Steve and Clint, would hide in the shadow of the garage and shoot the Indian riders as the train rounded the "goat yard" turn.

But most kids were content just to drive or ride. One Sunday afternoon, a bicycle arrived with a rider on the handlebars and towing a big wagon loaded with small eager train riders.

The boomer train became a figure of joy and fun for all involved. It was a fair weather weekend ritual on Otey Lane from 1958 until 1970. We moved to the Rock family home place in Goochland and the train was stored in the old corn house. Cheryl helped us restore the home on many weekends.

THE REVIVAL

In February 2016, as my 89th spring approached, I dreaded a summer without a project or anywhere to go. I sold my motorhome in October 2015, and now felt old and useless.



After a lunch excursion, Cheryl and I visited a toy store. She wanted a book for her grandson who loves trains. Paying for the book, she mentioned to the lady cashier our backyard railroad of her youth. As they talked and enthused about it, my old mind had an "aha" moment: why not bring it back to life and sell it? In the car I mentioned the idea and Cheryl liked it, but asked if I could handle the big task now. "We'll see," I replied, wondering myself.

March 2016 found me sitting on the sunny floor in the doorway of the corn house pulling the heavy trucks off of each unit. This began the disassembly of each and every part of the train, including all operating and driving gears. What a daunting pile of metal parts and nuts and bolts to be cleaned, scraped, degreased and repainted. The days and the work slipped by, and it was time for a renewed train to be assembled.

A clean, bare engine bed was soon crowded again with a new engine and all operating and driving gear. All running trucks looked new and each coupler worked with a beautiful paintjob. We now had a revived boomer train. Cheryl was ecstatic when I said that it was now her train, and that she was assigned chief engineer.

Cheryl and her husband Ronnie have a farm in Goochland. Ronnie had been captivated by the train since he first saw it. Quickly, he picked out a site on the large house lawn and outlined the 300-foot track with red flags. Within 10 days, Ronnie had 600 feet of new truck steel and 300 new 2x4 ties on site. On a hot Saturday morning, three eager grandchildren dropped 300 ties around the red flagged track path. A small window in the playhouse became a ticket window, and an old chalkboard displayed written rules for riders. A roll of real tickets appeared along with engineer and conductor caps. The railroad was named "The C and S Railroad" in honor of our sons.

The train was waiting only for a track. My son Clint and I welded the steel into long sections and dragged them over to Ronnie, who promptly nailed them to ties. He used my original track gauge to lay the track. The track ran behind the kids' old playhouse, which was quickly converted into a station. Ronnie added a through train shelter to the back.

The first revived train driver was Cheryl. Her three grandchildren were jumping with joy and Cheryl stopped to let them get aboard. In short order, they were excitedly taking turns as engineer. We were all so pleased that the resurrected train was running again. Clint was also an original driver and rider on the train that morning. The track was well settled by grandchildren and visitors before a train party was held in July. Many people and lots of children enjoyed this day of celebrating the return of that much loved little train.



Six of the original riders rode it again after over 46 years. But one sad moment: our first engine driver in 1957 was our dear oldest son, Steve. Sadly, we lost him in 2015.

Several other original riders have responded to Facebook, seeing pictures saying, "Yeah! I remember riding that train!" But the fun and laughter of so many children and adults that day, and since, has put a lot of joy in a crusty old marines heart.

Cheryl and Ronnie have been offered many thanks and much appreciation for their part in this endeavor. They both start the train up happily when new or previous riders arrive. The long ago joyous noise of that little train covered in happy kids still echoes in my mind. It was that motivation that drove four months of tedious labor.

Inherent innocence in children lets them express true emotions easily. We've heard many exclamations such as one little boy's remark, "That's the greatest thing I've ever seen!" Another

small fellow was waiting to ride and Ronnie said it might not start. "That's okay, it will be great just to sit on it." One 5-year-old boy, an overnight visitor, enjoyed riding it so much that he found Ronnie in the morning and rode around and around by himself. And once, the vet was needed and brought her 3-year-old boy. His eyes lit up when he saw the train and exclaimed "A real train!" He got many rides before going home. His mother on another day asked him if he wanted to go with her on a call. He asked. "Do they have a train?"

Cheryl and Ronnie gave me a 90th birthday party this past June. The train was the center of the party, now in its second reborn season. My three grown-up grandchildren had their first rides with six of us originals.

What a happy legacy the boomer train enjoys. The chief engineer is now Cheryl's 7-year-old grandson, John Mason. Grinning his snaggletooth smile and wearing his striped engineers cap, he drives on and on.

-J. Howard Rock

Summertime in the Outer Banks

By Rosemary Burns

Memories illuminate the mind like lightning bugs



For several years in the late '60s and early '70s, my family vacationed in the Outer Banks. I was one of eight kids, and we would meet up with our aunt and uncle (who had five kids), and rent two adjoining cottages on Lindbergh Avenue in Kitty Hawk.

Now, when I say cottages, I mean old school, small, single-storied, un-air conditioned, bring-your-own-sheets-towels-and-box-fans cottages! That was a standard summer vacation back in the day! And we were so happy to be able to experience it. It was nothing like the lovely massive estates that dot the shores of the OBX of today.

Imagine if you will, 13 kids, four parents, two grandmothers and an array of pets all cooking, eating, swimming, playing and sleeping in two tiny, hot houses! We played endless games of Gin Rummy, Crazy Eights and Go Fish. We rode bikes, played tag and Mother May I, and caught lightning bugs. It was magical.

It was, and is still, a great place to vacation with your family. So great in fact, that my parents were able to eventually buy a beach house in Kitty Hawk in their retirement and opened it up to their ever-expanding extended family. They named it “Casa de Abuelos”! It became and remains THE premiere vacation destination for our family.

Dad has been gone five years now, but he is still very much felt in spirit at the beach house. Dad traveled quite a lot for his career, but the OBX was his favorite place to be. He puttered around his house fixing what he could, reading books and collecting large white clamshells from the beach and lining his flowerbeds with them. Mom still enjoys her home by the sea as often as possible.

I have been a parent myself now for thirty years. My husband and I honeymooned on the OBX and we have been bringing our four kids here ever since. Our very favorite thing to do each trip is climb the majestic Jockey’s Ridge sand dunes. Picture a massive sandbox for the entire family to play in. From the delicious feel of your hamstrings burning as you climb the ever-shifting dunes to that moment when you reach the pinnacle and stop to catch your breath and look around, only to experience the breath-taking views of sea and sound! Like a child, you don’t resist the urge to run and jump off the edge of the dune only to turn right around to climb back up again and again!

Look up! Colorful kites and hang gliders soar overhead. Sunsets are spectacular ... standing on top of Jockey’s Ridge, I can sense stress being blown away by the sea breezes. I can feel the sun warming my body, and if I close my eyes, I can see myself as a ten-year-old girl wearing a cotton romper, my nose freckled and sunburned, running around barefoot and sporting a great big smile knowing that I am loved and cared for and on a summer vacation with my family.

Three Weddings ... and a Farmhouse

By Randy Fitzgerald

If these walls could reflect



Once again, our little four-room farmhouse up near Charlottesville is the setting for a wedding. The house, built sometime in the 1890s, has seen more than its share of happy occasions and clearly more stories than Barb and I have any way of knowing.

Barb’s paternal grandparents, who lived next door, bought the house in 1922 for \$600. It was a two-room cottage then, and Barb’s father and grandfather added two more rooms when her parents married. Since neither man was a carpenter, there are strange angles and things that don’t quite dovetail, but the house was a happy home for Barb and her two sisters as they grew up. After her parents died, Barb inherited the house because she was the daughter who loved it best.

In June of 1951, the oldest sister, Rue Goodman, married the handsome Earl Walker in the farmhouse parlor in a traditional religious ceremony (complete with promises to “love, honor and obey”). The solemn service was conducted by the black-suited pastor from Grace Episcopal Church down the road at Cismont. In the parlor were a woodstove, a shiny velvet sofa and the big black piano where Rue practiced the hymns she played at church. There were three bridesmaids, dressed in ankle-length organza, and about a dozen guests, all family. The marriage lasted happily until Earl died in June of 2010, on the day after their 59th anniversary.

The second marriage at the farm was 41 years later, in 1992: the outdoor wedding of our friend Mary Bear and her charming British groom, John Roberts. It was a traditional ceremony, but no way would Mary promise to obey! The wedding was held under a maple tree in the side yard and conducted by a woman preacher, somewhat a rarity among country folk back then. Mary, who kept her name, wore a dress she had made, and one of her sons played his guitar and sang a song he wrote for her. Mary’s ex-husband was the photographer. That marriage lasted happily until John’s death in 2007.

MODERN-DAY NUPTIALS

Then there is this summer’s wedding, the marriage of daughter Sarah and her longtime love, Ian Davis, to take place on the same June date as Rue and Earl’s wedding, only 65 years later. But there’s nothing traditional about this one.



Sarah and Ian, who live in Illinois, will be married on the front porch by Sarah’s friend, Paige, a professor at JMU with an online certificate allowing her to conduct the ceremony. Invitations went out online. The guest list includes a large contingent of parents, step-parents, step-siblings, step-children, ex-spouses and ex-dates – a very modern family configuration. The best man is Ian’s 9-year-old son, Finn, and – since Sarah has no attendants and wants no procession and no bouquet – the four groomsmen will be escorting llamas decorated with garlands of flowers.

Today’s weddings often seem more like a big party, and Sarah and Ian are in that mode. My old bluegrass band, East of Afton, will be playing, as will a rock ‘n’ roll band from Staunton. There will be a dance floor, fire pit and fireworks – and a 20-foot inflatable slide and obstacle course in the garden, for kids and adults alike.

Dinner will be “imported” by Buz and Ned’s and Sally Bell’s, food Sarah enjoyed when she lived in Richmond. Because bride and groom are “zero throwaway” advocates, there will be no paper or plastic products. Barb, who is rounding up china plates, glasses and “real” cutlery, says never has a wedding been such a boon for Dollar Tree!

Certainly weddings have changed greatly over the years – and the millennials have taken the rite and ritual in totally new directions. Our hope and expectation is that this latest farm marriage will result in the same kind of long-lasting, ’til-death union that the other two sustained. Our other hope is that the llamas don’t spit on anybody.

Randy Fitzgerald is the author of Flights of Fancy: Stories, Conversations and Life Travels with a Bemused Columnist and His Whimsical Wife, published last fall. He was a longtime public relations director at the University of Richmond and columnist for The Richmond News Leader and the Richmond Times-Dispatch and taught modern American literature at Virginia Union University. RFitzger@gmail.com

The Mountains Are Calling, So I Must Go

By Carole Olsen

When life's crossroads take you to a hiking trail



By my late fifties, I was at a crossroads in my life. I started to realize that, after all of these years married to my husband, I was scared to venture out on my own; my life was limited, and having friends scared me.

“Either I change or I die” kept going through my mind.

In an attempt to be relieved from my anxiety, my husband and I ventured to the Blue Ridge Parkway one sunny day and hiked a trail near Humpback Rocks. It was just a couple of miles long, but this was the first time in a few years where I felt connected to anything spiritual. The air of silence was so refreshing to my racing mind, the nature surrounding me pacified my aching soul. I knew this must be the way to heal. I had voiced this to Eric – a golfer, and not much of a hiker – so here was where I had to leave my comfort zone and literally branch out.

I had to attempt this on my own, but where do I start? I found a site, Meetup.com on my computer. I told the Meetup people that I was interested in hiking in the Richmond area, and their wise guru spit out a group I should join: The Central Virginia Trailblazers. I joined the group and immediately signed up for a five-mile hike in Shenandoah National Park, which ventured up to Rapidan Camp and then continued from there. This retreat complex housed the president and first lady, President Herbert Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover, when they needed a break from the White House. Hoover would fly fish in the Rapidan River while Mrs. Hoover pursued her endeavors with organizing the Girl Scouts of America.

Altogether, it sounded like a very interesting first hike.

It was very nerve-racking meeting this new group of people to hike with, as they all were at least ten years younger than myself and seemed to be experienced trekkers. We started our hike slowly over a couple of little creeks which led up to the Hoover’s retreat. I really enjoyed the tour of the complex but was nervous about keeping up with the hikers after the tour. It was a struggle at first, but I managed to get into the rhythm of it. I was really doing this, and I felt a part of it! I remember coming down the mountain after two miles, onto a wide grassy path where trees arched overhead, almost giving it a feeling of an arbor. This was a sign of a new beginning. I made it to the other side of the mountain and a new way of life.

I guess I have been actively hiking for several years since that day, usually doing it on a weekly basis. I have covered thousands of miles, and worn out many pairs of hiking boots. I keep on thanking the God of the Universe for giving me legs to hike with; putting one foot in front of the other, bringing me to places I never dreamed I would see, some of which are right in my own backyard.



North Bank Trail in the James River Park System in Richmond

One of Richmond’s treasures is the Buttermilk Trail and James River North Bank Trails, a 6.2-mile loop along the James River. I usually start this hike from Forest Hill Park (adding a mile to the hike), then proceed over to Belle Island, across the pedestrian bridge over the James, hiking over to the Nickel Bridge and then head east towards Forest Hill Park again. It is truly amazing to see the beauty of the James River; its rapids, bird life, and wildflowers along the way. There are challenging hills, streams, and rock formations to gaze upon. You can see a bear on this trail if you’re lucky enough to see the caged one at Maymont.

I hiked the Great Smokies a few years ago for the 67th birthday. Ten of my gal pal hikers and myself summited Mt Le Conte at 6,594 feet. It was a challenging hike, sometimes walking on rocky ledges holding onto a safety cord so I didn’t fall thousands of feet below.

The girl who couldn’t go to the top of the bleachers in high school in fear of falling was now dangling on ridges and relying on a wire bolted into a rock to keep her alive.

Really?

The Smoky Mountains have two ecosystems; it gets its name from the smoke-like moisture that comes from the rainforest dew in the lower parts of the mountains and the upper parts having lush evergreens that smell heavenly.

Upon summiting, we stayed overnight at Le Conte Lodge that had no electricity but cooked us hearty meals by means of propane gas. I was so surprised when a birthday cake was presented to me after dinner; how did they bake it? The only way they can get food up to the lodge is by llama.

Once or twice a week, teams of llama carry backpacks full of food and other necessities up to the lodge. We were lucky enough to see a pack on our way down heading up the mountain. I did not want to get too close to them – I heard they spit at you.

Recently, I hiked a lovely ten-mile hike in Shenandoah National Park along the Hazel River. I was hiking with one of my favorite people who made the observation that being out here is all that we need physically, emotionally, and spiritually. When I think of her statement, I have to agree. Nothing seemed to satisfy me when I went through that time of self-doubt except being on a mountain path and becoming one with nature.

I plan on doing this for as long as I can. Maybe they’ll even come out with a walker for hiking – that would be a hoot!



Me and fellow hikers from Central Virginia Trailblazers upon completion of the Capital Trail in Williamsburg.



Sunset at Grayson Highland State Park. Backpacking weekend and seeing wild ponies in the park



Hiking near Mary’s Rock Shenandoah National Park

The Unique and Surprising Joy of Becoming a Step-Grandmother

By Sharon Drennan

And how I was prepared to step into grandma position #3



I was only dating my husband when his oldest son announced with such joy that he and his wife were expecting their first child. My future husband was becoming a grandfather in a few short months. Not only that, there were two other grandmothers and a grandfather that would ALL be experiencing this joy for the first time. Wow, that's a lot of love and excitement in one family.

We were married and I thought about what my place might be within this nontraditional family with a baby on the way. I was new on the scene so clearly it would go like this: the other two grandmothers would come first and second, and I would be third. They would help decorate the nursery and plan the baby shower; they might even attend doctor appointments with the new mommy. They would choose their own special grandma name, and they would certainly be the first called when the baby arrived.

I would participate as invited.

I shared my thoughts with my husband and we decided together that it was okay with us if I was number three on the grandma list. It only made sense, and we settled in to be comfortable with whatever time we would have with this new precious baby.

No one could ever have prepared me for how wrong I was, and the joy I would soon experience. That baby has lit up our world since the day he arrived, and *he* sets the stage making all of us grandmas feel like *number one*. His parents are doing everything right, so our grandson doesn't know labels or pecking order as his silly old step-grandma had expected.

These days, I am step-grandma to two beautiful children and I couldn't possibly love them anymore. When I walk in the door, they run to me for hugs and kisses. They talk to me on the phone or Facetime if something exciting has happened. I've been to their school and attended recreational activities. I live for the days when their mom and dad ask for a babysitter; nothing is more fun than an entire day with these two. Our home is filled with pictures of them and their beautiful smiles, and there's nothing better than bragging about them with our friends in social gatherings. Their unconditional love will always make me feel like number one. I am a very blessed grandma!

Herbicidal Tendencies

By Mike Spiegel

The guidance to talk to indoor plants shows mixed results



You may recall that back in the ’70s it was considered good horticulture to talk to indoor plants. Even so, I always suspected that most plants couldn’t care less if humans talked to them, just as long as they got watered and carefully pruned before big dates, such as when they were centerpieces at weddings or other fancy soirees.

Considering that plants had been around for billions of years, I was pretty sure they regarded us humans as Johnny-come-lately’s, and they were just listening politely and biding their time until we became extinct. And even though vegetables had always been willing to sacrifice themselves for our nourishment, plants like tobacco took the initiative to speed up our demise. Cannabis, on the other hand, didn’t care one way or the other and was always pretty cool about the whole human thing. But poison ivy was just plain mean.

Outdoor plants have never really had anyone talk to them, except for yard-care workers who often used profanity (even around impressionable young seedlings). And even though there was an old guy in my neighborhood who used to talk to trees and shrubs on a regular basis, he also talked to fire hydrants, mailboxes, and things that weren’t even there. As a result, most of the plants never took him seriously. I also noticed that entire forests had managed to prosper over the eons without stimulating conversations with humans.

Paternal attempts at plant conversations

But just to be on the safe side, I used to talk to indoor plants, and I would even compliment them on the way they effortlessly performed photosynthesis. But it never seemed to have a positive effect, and the only plant life I ever managed to sustain with any degree of success was some fuzzy blue stuff in my refrigerator that gave birth to a crop of yellow stuff that was eventually overrun by some orange-and-black stuff that had been lurking behind what I could only guess were the fossilized remains of a meatloaf sandwich. In fact, I was so bad with plants that my Chia Pet ran away and didn’t leave a forwarding address. And if herbicide was a capital crime, I’d be serving multiple life sentences.

Then, late one night, while I was burying some of my deceased succulents in the crawl space, I discovered why all my leafy roommates ended up croaking. Yes, there it was – in bold capital letters – right on the bottom of the pot of my feckless Ficus: “PRODUCT OF MEXICO.” To my surprise, my herbaceous roommates were first-generation immigrants, and with the exception of the cannabis, most of them had come here legally on student visas. Yup, all that time I had been talking to my plants in English, and the poor things had no idea what I was saying!

There was only one thing to do, and I set about learning Spanish. But this was in the pre-Rosetta-Stone era, and I had to do it the old-fashioned way ... by listening to Cheech & Chong albums. In the end, my vegetation appreciated the gesture, and they eventually rewarded my efforts with various offshoots, rhizomes, and even some cute little buds. Unfortunately, I never did learn Yiddish, and my wandering Jew wandered off into the desert, and I haven’t heard from it in 40 years.

Alas, all of those plants are long gone – with the exception of the cannabis, which is still living in my basement and doesn’t seem to have much motivation to get a place of its own.

Mike Spiegel is a retired human resources manager and former Richmond resident who is trying his hand as a writer, inventor, and businessman. He currently resides in Fairlawn, Virginia.

Don't Forget to Remember

By Richard Basis

That memory of ours can be so fickle...



There have been many scientific studies on why the older we get, the more we forget. Apparently, we can decelerate the process, but there’s nothing we can do to prevent it.

Contrary to popular research, it seems to me that the longer we live, the more crap there is to remember and more things we’re going to forget. It’s just simple math.

For example, I have trouble remembering anyone’s new phone number (including my own). I can still remember my childhood phone number, but a few years ago my head hit its maximum occupancy for that sort of information. Computer passwords have become the bane of my existence. Most of us have multiple online accounts now and each one needs its own password. (Remember when you only had to remember your mother’s maiden name?) Just thinking about every password, phone number, address, bank, alarm, and security code that I have to remember makes my brain want to throw up.

How often do you walk into a room to get something, but by the time you got there you forgot what it was? Did you ever mean to tell somebody something that you can’t remember if you actually told them? Worst of all, have you ever had someone tell you something you said that you have absolutely no recollection of saying? This seems to happen to me a lot. It frightens me when people tell me I told them something years ago that they never forgot because it was so profound and meaningful or because it was so upsetting and hurtful. No one should ever hold onto anything I say. I’m usually just talking shit. I don’t mean half of it and apparently, I don’t remember most of it.

Sometimes I am reminded about someone I used to know years ago but have completely forgotten about, until I happen to run into them. This can create some very awkward situations. Especially when they remember me like it was yesterday. Sometimes these are people that I liked a lot and was friendly with for years. We might have worked together or had mutual friends or even had sex, but because it was so long ago I had completely forgotten they ever existed. How could I forget whole people like that? What else have I completely forgotten?

It’s one of the few things that I envy about people who have grown up in today’s smartphone driven culture. Young people (I hate calling them that because it clearly positions me as the opposite) always have a camera on them these days and can always take pictures of everyone they meet and every place they go. (Not to mention every meal they eat, every item they buy, and every pose they make.) Granted, it is a double-edged sword in that they often miss the moment they are living in while trying to capture the image that will remind them of it. I guess it’s like the old expression, “You can’t have your cake and eat it, too.” Which, by the way, I never understood. What’s the point of having cake if you can’t eat it?

I kept a journal (some might call it a diary but I think that sounds girly) from the time I was 19 until the time I was 49. I hadn’t looked at it since I was 50. So, on my 60th birthday I decided to read it again. It was over 350 pages long and I was surprised by what I found in it. There were so many things I had completely forgotten and there were several things that I remembered completely differently from the way they apparently happened. This taught me a very valuable lesson: I can no longer be 100% certain of anything I think I remember. I don’t think anyone can. Now I find myself frequently using the expressions “Not that I can remember” and “To the best of my recollection.” As if I were under oath all the time.

Did you know that we all have false memories? (It’s an actual thing. I looked it up.) Especially as we get older. There’s even a famous quote from Stephen King that says, “Passing time adds false memories and modifies real ones.” I have had arguments with my sister where she claims that something I remember happening to me as a child, actually happened to her. At first, I thought it was really strange that she would hijack my memories like that. Until I heard of it happening to other people and realized it was fairly common. So now I’m not so sure. Maybe it did happen to my sister. Maybe I just imagined the whole thing. Maybe the world in my dreams is real and the real world is only a dream. Or maybe I’ve been watching too many old *Twilight Zone* reruns.

Salvador Dali said, “The difference between false memories and true ones is the same for jewels: it is always the false ones that look the most real, the most brilliant.” So, if you think that your memories are always accurate: think again. I’m not saying that we all need to question everything in our pasts but, if someone challenges you, don’t be so sure about it. Admit, at least to yourself, that you could be wrong. Some people are very good at rewriting their history. Whether it’s inadvertently (as with false memories) or on purpose (to make themselves sound better or more interesting). Either way, the more you tell a story, the more you are going to believe it. But that doesn’t mean the rest of us have to.



Dead, dead, dead, dead, and me

After enough time passes, all memories – even our happiest ones – become bittersweet. I used to enjoy going through old photo albums with my mother. She would tell me stories of times before I was born and we would share fond memories together. But, when she got older, it started to get a little depressing. She would flip through the pages, pointing out various friends and family with her finger of death, “Dead. Dead. Dead. Dying. Dead.” Eventually, I asked her to stop doing that and suggested she only point out the ones who were still alive, since that would be a shorter list. The funny (and sad) thing is – I now find myself doing the same thing when I look at my

old photo albums.

As we get older, we depend on our memories more than ever. They become more precious with time. When we can no longer relive the experiences, or revisit the people and places we love, all we can do is remember them. So, hang onto those memories in whatever way you can. I strongly urge you to write them down, take lots of pictures and tell your stories to anyone who would like to hear them. Because your memory can be like a bad employee who you think is doing a good job, while they’re really lying and stealing from you the whole time.

There was something else I wanted to say on this subject ... but I can’t remember what it was.

Old Dude Social Media Strategy

By Greg Schwem

40 years later, I will be the most liked student in my high school



I recently contracted a social media manager, which is a business-y phrase for “paying somebody to make me more popular.”

Jeremy’s duties were clear: Figure out how to increase exposure for my streaming television show, “**A Comedian Crashes Your Pad**,” by getting me more YouTube views, more Instagram followers and “likes.”

As he repeatedly explained, the way to achieve higher numbers is by posting content as often as possible and engaging with viewers regardless of their opinions. In other words, if they comment, “This show sucks and should be removed from YouTube,” I should reply, “Thank you for stopping by. Have you checked out my Instagram page?”

The plan worked, as my numbers quickly increased. But maybe I should have used the “Audrey Nicole Francisquini” strategy instead.

An alternative baby boomer social media strategy

Francisquini, 28, of Miami, was recently arrested for allegedly entering American Senior High School in Hialeah, Florida, and posing as a student solely to hand out pamphlets promoting her Instagram page. A Miami-Dade police report said Francisquini carried a skateboard and a painting as she roamed the halls, arousing suspicion after she continued doing so while classes were in session.

Francisquini was charged with multiple offenses after being identified, ironically, through her Instagram account. She is smiling in her mug shot and, yes, at first glance, she does resemble a high school student.

At 58 years old, I’d turn to my friend Kevin Haney for help in pulling off the high school look. Haney, who won an Oscar for his makeup expertise in “Driving Miss Daisy,” once transformed me into Bill Gates for a series of comedy shows. Yes, the process took four hours and required me to wear multiple layers of latex that made me scratch and sneeze, but the results were uncanny.

I’d choose my alma mater, Prospect High School in Mount Prospect, Illinois, for my ruse. Might as well pick a school where I’m familiar with the terrain, right? As long as the principal’s office is in the same location, I’ll know which area to avoid.

I don’t own a skateboard, nor do I paint, but I’m sure one of my high school tennis rackets is somewhere in my basement. I’ll carry that in one hand while holding my iPhone in the other. I’ll stick AirPods in my ears. Oh, and I’ll dress in baggy shorts, the preferred attire of high school males, even if the temperature is minus 20. Don’t believe me? You haven’t picked up a kid from school in January.

Now I just have to convince the Prospect student body to follow me on Instagram before I start sweating through my latex. Jeremy said one popular strategy is to conduct a giveaway; provide a prize to one lucky follower. But what do high school students want? A Chipotle gift card? A new pair of shorts? Bitcoin? I’ll worry about that later.

Steps toward sure-fire popularity

First, I need to find students. Should I crash soccer practice? Nah, can’t keep up. What about the marching band? Lots of potential followers there. I could slap my pamphlets on tuba cases and music stands while band members went through their paces.

From there I’ll mosey over to the drama club and tell all the members that, in exchange for a “like,” I’ll consider them for roles in an upcoming episode. Note that I’ll say, “consider.” Might as well teach these kids at an early age that, in show business, nothing is guaranteed.

If I continue to avoid school security, I’ll find the computer club. Perhaps one of those kids can write an algorithm guaranteed to get me even MORE followers. I’m not sure what I’d offer in return. My guess is that every member of a high school computer club is already a Bitcoin billionaire.

As I write this column, Francisquini’s Instagram account, although now private, has 3,526 followers, considerably more than mine. No word on how many she had when she began her alleged ruse, but a message on her profile says, “Video Explanation coming. Stay tuned.” I followed her just for that.

I’m sure her explanation will include an announcement of a Kickstarter campaign. For legal fees.

Greg Schwem is a corporate stand-up comedian and author of two books: Text Me If You’re Breathing: Observations, Frustrations and Life Lessons From a Low-Tech Dad and the recently released The Road To Success Goes Through the Salad Bar: A Pile of BS From a Corporate Comedian, available at Amazon.com. Visit Greg on the web at www.gregschwem.com.

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Like laughing? Check out other **Boomer articles on laughter** or the **baby boomer humor of Randy Fitzgerald**.

Rick Steves’ Europe: Café chitchat, chocolate cake, and the Vienna opera

By Rick Steves

The fine ingredients that fill the Viennese melting pot



Travel writer Rick Steves sets the stage for the glories of Austria, with a snapshot of the history, the people, the renowned, mouth-watering, Sacher torte and opera in Vienna.

As we’ve had to postpone our travels because of the pandemic, I believe a weekly dose of travel dreaming can be good medicine. Here’s one of my favorite European memories from Vienna – a reminder of the fun that awaits us at the other end of this crisis.

Munching Europe’s most famous chocolate cake – the Sacher torte – in Cafe Sacher, across from Europe’s finest opera house, I feel underdressed in my travel wear. Thankfully, a coffee party of older ladies, who fit right in with the smoked mirrors and chandeliers, make me feel welcome at their table. They’re buzzing with excitement about the opera they are about to see – talking of long-dead Viennese composers as if they were still neighbors and even bursting into occasional bits of arias.

Loni, the elegant white-haired ringleader, answers my questions about Austria. “A true Viennese is not Austrian, but a cocktail,” she says, wiping the brown icing from her smile. “We are a mix of the old Habsburg Empire. My grandparents are Hungarian.” Gesturing to each of her friends, she adds, “And Gosha’s are Polish, Gabi’s are Romanian, and I don’t even know what hers are.”

“It’s a melting pot,” I say.

They respond, “Yes, like America.”

Filling the pot with the finest of ingredients

For 600 years, Vienna was the head of the once-grand Habsburg Empire. In 1900, Vienna’s nearly two million inhabitants made it the world’s sixth-largest city (after London, New York, Paris, Berlin, and Chicago). Then Austria started and lost World War I – and its far-flung holdings. Today’s Vienna is a “head without a body,” an elegant capital ruling tiny Austria. The average Viennese mother has one child, and the population has dropped to 1.8 million.

I ask Loni about Austria’s low birthrate.

“Dogs are the preferred child,” she says, inspiring pearl-rattling peals of laughter from her friends.

Sharing coffee and cake with Viennese aristocracy who live as if Vienna were an eastern Paris, and as if calories didn’t count, I’m seeing the soul of Vienna. Vienna may have lost its political clout, but culturally and historically, this city of Freud, Brahms, a gaggle of Strausses, Empress Maria Theresa’s many children, and a dynasty of Holy Roman Emperors remains right up there with Paris, London, and Rome.

As far back as the 12th century, Vienna was a mecca for musicians, both secular and sacred. The Habsburg emperors of the 17th and 18th centuries were not only generous supporters of music but also fine musicians themselves (Maria Theresa played a mean double bass). Composers such as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, and Mahler gravitated to this music-friendly environment. They taught each other, jammed together, and spent a lot of time in Habsburg palaces. Beethoven was a famous figure, walking – lost in musical thought – through Vienna’s wooded parks.

After the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, the Congress of Vienna shaped 19th-century Europe. Vienna enjoyed its violin-filled belle époque, which shaped our romantic image of the city: fine wine, cafés, waltzes, and these great chocolate cakes. The waltz was the rage and “Waltz King” Johann Strauss and his brothers kept Vienna’s 300 ballrooms spinning. This musical tradition created the prestigious Viennese institutions that tourists enjoy today: the opera, Boys’ Choir, and great Baroque halls and churches, all busy with classical concerts.

Waltzing into the present

As we split up the bill and drain the last of our coffee, the women take opera tickets out of their purses in anticipation. “Where will you be sitting?” Loni asks.

“Actually, I’ll be standing,” I say. “I’ve got a *Stehplatz*, a standing-room-only ticket.” (Vienna opera makes sure students and music-lovers with limited budgets can see performances on the cheap – if they don’t mind climbing to the top of the theater and standing.)

The women look at me kindly, perhaps wondering if they should have paid for my cake and coffee.

“A *Stehplatz* is just EUR4. So I have money left over for more Sacher torte,” I tell them with a smile. What I don’t say is that, for me, three hours is a lot of opera. A *Stehplatz* allows me the cheap and easy option of leaving early.

Leaving the café, we talk opera as we cross the street. The prestigious Vienna Opera isn’t backed in the pit by the famous Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, but by its farm team: second-string strings. Still, Loni reminds me, “It’s one of the world’s top opera houses.” Even with 300 performances a year, expensive seats are normally sold out – mostly to well-dressed, Sacher torte-eating locals. Saying goodbye to my new friends, I head for the standing-room ticket window. Cackling as old friends do, they waltz through the grand floor entrance and into another evening of high Viennese culture.

*Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours. This article was adapted from his new book, **For the Love of Europe**. You can email Rick at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.*

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The New Camp Trapezium Brewpub in Amherst, Virginia

By Annie Tobey

A bucolic setting for wild and funky ales – plus pizza and overnight stays



The new Camp Trapezium brewpub in Amherst, Virginia, makes its home in a creatively renovated historic mill. The brewery specializes in mixed-culture fermentations and wild ales, supplemented by beers from its home in Petersburg. The food starts with a brick-fired oven, offering red and white pizzas as well as a modest selection of starters and desserts.

Just a few minutes north of Lynchburg, Camp Trapezium makes for an easy day trip from Roanoke, Charlottesville, Farmville, Petersburg, Richmond, and other Virginia cities and towns.

The Camp’s older siblings

Camp Trapezium is the third brewery developed by Dave McCormack of Waukeshaw Development. Waukeshaw’s portfolio is stocked with historic buildings and challenging renovations in small towns and ugly-duckling neighborhoods. Waukeshaw renovates a property, then creates a separate business to manage the new incarnations, including breweries and residential lofts.

“Small towns everywhere are struggling with identity, population, economic development. This presents very interesting opportunities,” McCormack told the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

McCormack’s first renovation-plus-brewery was Trapezium Brewing, which opened in 2016. He put the taproom and production brewery in a renovated a coal plant and an 1890 icehouse, in the once-neglected historic district of Old Towne Petersburg, Virginia. Right out of the gate, the brewery had a 30-barrel system and a bottling line. The 150-seat taproom included a kitchen serving brick-oven pizzas.

That was followed by Beale’s in Bedford, Virginia, in 2017, in a deserted woolen mill. Besides the brewery’s 30-barrel brew house, the old mill houses a large, high-ceilinged, industrial-chic taproom with full kitchen, plus outdoor patio and stage.

McCormack brought James Frazer on as head brewer at Trapezium Brewing. Frazer has continued to oversee beer brewing and planning for Waukeshaw’s new properties, too.

Camp Trapezium brewpub



Bar at Camp Trapezium with Enchanting Rustic Surrealism sour ale

Beer production highlights Belgian-style beers and mixed-culture fermentations – 100 percent barrel fermented. “I’m going to be focusing on a few styles so it doesn’t get too chaotic,” Frazer said, mentioning Flanders red, oud bruin, and spontaneous fermentations. Knowing that Camp Trapezium was coming down the pike, he’s been building his collection of barrels for several years. He also began working with Camp Trapezium branded beers long before the official opening.

Frazer aims to use predominantly Virginia-grown ingredients (excepting hops). Toward that goal, he’s been working with RVA Yeast Labs to harvest yeast cultures from the property and with Murphy & Rude Malting for the grain. He’s been cultivating fruit on the farm and relationships with local farmers. In addition, the property is home to 18 beehives from Richmond-based Black Heath Meadery.

The renovated mill at **Camp Trapezium** houses a two-vessel five-barrel brewhouse, two 10-barrel stainless fermenters, a brite tank, and a coolship. “The fermenters will really be used for blending tanks and the

brite tank will be used for a sugar tank to naturally carbonate the beer,” said Frazer.

“It’s a great opportunity to elevate and deconstruct the Trapezium brand – taking the things we’ve learned and exemplifying especially these mixed cultures by going heavy on fruit but also being really thoughtful about our hoppy beers, too.”

Early beers at Camp Trapezium included

The barrel-aged, mixed-fermentation, wild-ale program started strong at the Camp Trapezium brewpub. These four beers were offered in bottles, brewed primarily with Virginia-grown ingredients, barrel-aged, and naturally carbonated.

Farmhouse series: Spring

Brewed in the farmhouse tradition, this beer is comprised of ingredients primarily grown on the farm. It’s slightly tart with notes of overripe melon, strawberries, and banana.

Run Rabbit Run

The barrel-fermented fruited mixed culture also bursts with boysenberry and pomegranate additions, complemented by a rustic funkiness and vanilla oak.

The Orchard Series: Blueberry

Blueberries from Silver Creek Orchards in Tyro, Virginia, were fermented with a mixed-culture golden ale in red wine barrels for 12 months and conditioned on blueberries for eight months.

Chasing Ponies

Camp Trapezium-branded Chasing Ponies won a silver medal in the U.S. Open Beer Championship’s sour/Belgian lambic style category. The fruited mixed-culture ale had a two-year gestation period of aging, fermenting, and refermenting. It presents a balance of acidity, farmhouse earthiness, and subtle notes of raspberry.

Visiting the Camp

The renovated mill also houses a tasting room and a kitchen, with a creek-side biergarten outside.

The bones of the old mill create a solid, rustic atmosphere. Complementary accessories contribute to the look: an old mill price list, 1960 Virginia license plate, bear hide, a ’60s-ish cruiser bicycle, and more. Though windows are few, lighting carries over the industrial feel while unobtrusively illuminating the interior.

In addition to mixed fermentation and wild ales from Camp Trapezium, the tasting room taps beers from the original Trapezium brewery. These include approachable gateway beers, such as a lemon-honey ginger, blonde ale, brown ale, porter, and lager, plus a diversity of other styles, including a farmhouse ale, New England-style IPA, double IPA, and more.

The kitchen serves brick-oven pizza, with both red sauce and olive oil and garlic base.



Just a few steps from the mill, a farmhouse has been converted to an eight-room B&B. The inn gives off a bucolic farmhouse vibe, with beautiful wood floors, country trim, and sloped ceilings on upper floors. Retro furnishings, fixtures, and accessories complement the vibe. Guests can relax on the covered front porch or comfy living room. Each room has a mini fridge, so guests can bring over Camp Trapezium beers to enjoy later. Rooms can be rented separately, or the house can be rented as a whole.

The ABC license extends across the Camp Trapezium property, enabling guests of the brewery and B&B to explore with beers in hand.

Still to come

Two more breweries are in the works for the Waukeshaw team.

Beale’s East, Yorktown

As new, ground-up construction, the Yorktown project differs from its brewery siblings. The location will have indoor and outdoor seating, full-service bars indoors and out, and a pet-friendly patio. The kitchen will serve locally sourced seafood and other American fare.

Taps will pour Beale’s flagships as well as small-batch, Yorktown-only releases, coming from the seven-barrel brewhouse, 15-barrel fermenters, and 15-barrel lagering tanks, with possibly a 15-barrel foeder.

Frazer sees Beale’s East as a chance to take some favorites from the Bedford Beale’s, modifying them to explore the brand. “York will be kind of like a playground ... I’m working on the whole New Age American lager – what is that? I’ve been doing a little R&D and exploring it and trying to modernize lager from the German purity law.” Craft brewers have created the India pale lager, but, Frazer asked, “What else can we do with lagers?”

93 by Trapezium, Church Hill

The Trapezium-branded location in Church Hill will use receiving and blending tanks rather than brewing its own beer. Fermented beer will come from the other locations to be inoculated with bacteria or put in spirit barrels or foeders, sometimes on oak, sometimes with fruit. “The beers come here to mature,” said Frazer. “Essentially we’re putting puzzle pieces together, letting them sit, then going back to our pieces to figure out what we’re going to make.

“It’s tough to come into Richmond with a brewery. There are so many amazing breweries ... so you come in with something completely different – a blender,” said Frazer.

Waukeshaw Development purchased the 1927 Masonic lodge in 2020. The renovated building will include a kitchen, outdoor and indoor seating, and an event space on the second floor.

As with Camp Trapezium, Frazer started pulling barrels about two years ago – think Buffalo Trace, Blanton’s, a Columbian 12-year rum, and Maraschino #3 char barrels – and working on the “artistry of blending.”

“This will be the dark side of Trapezium,” said Frazer, “a little rougher around the edges.” In describing the vibe, he said, “It’s going to be this place where like Ozzy would go after a show, where Black Sabbath would hang out, with tapestries, candles, a chalice, mysterious things. The whole Mason thing is mysterious; the branding is right there, we’ve got to tap into it.”



Camp Trapezium tasting room from the front entrance

Rick Steves’ Europe: The Italian Love of Eating

By Rick Steves

Raw slabs of beef and fleeting seasonal dishes



This land of a thousand bell towers is also the land of a thousand regional cuisines,” says Rick Steves on Italian cuisine. When in Italy, he never tires of the country’s fresh regional foods and the culinary reverence of its people.

As we’ve had to postpone our travels because of the pandemic, I believe a weekly dose of travel dreaming can be good medicine. Here’s one of my favorite European memories. And, like so many, it involves eating in Italy – a reminder of the delicious experiences that await us at the other end of this crisis.

Spending a month in Italy, the thought of eating anything other than Italian food never occurs to me. Other than France, I doubt there’s another country in Europe that could hold my palate’s interest so completely. One reason I don’t tire of going local here is that this land of a thousand bell towers is also the land of a thousand regional cuisines. And I celebrate each region’s forte.



Leave it to cleaver: Giulio lops off another hunk of beef.

commotion the raw slabs of beef on butcher paper. Giulio presents the slabs to my friends and me, telling us the weight and price and getting our permission to cook it. He then dances back to the inferno and cooks the slabs: seven minutes on one side, seven on the other. There’s no asking how you’d like it done; this is the way it is done. Seven minutes on one side, seven on the other ... fifteen minutes later, we get our steaks.

Traditional, devout locavores

In Italy, the cuisine is revered – and the quality of the ingredients is sacred. While French cuisine is famously enthusiastic about the sauces, for Italians, sauces highlight the delightful flavor of their favorite seasonal ingredients. Italians like to say, “*La miglior cucina comincia dal mercato.*” (“The best cuisine starts from the market.”) They care deeply about what’s in season and what’s grown locally.

One night in Florence, I’m dining with my friend Cincia at her favorite trattoria when the chef comes out to chat with her. They get into an animated debate about the ingredients: “Arugula is not yet in season. But oh, Signora Maria has more sun in her backyard, and her chickens give her a marvelous fertilizer.”

Then the topic changes to the cuisine turmoil caused by erratic weather. *Vignarola*, the beloved stew consisting of artichokes, peas, and fava beans, is on the menu before its normal season. Cincia, seeming traumatized, says, “Vignarola, how can it be served so early? I’ve never seen it on a menu before Easter.” The chef, who only makes it for a few weeks each spring during a perfect storm of seasonality when everything is bursting with flavor, has to convince her that the season has changed and it’s on the menu because this is the new season.

Enjoying the commotion, I explain to Cincia that this is the kind of restaurant I seek out in Italy. It ticks all the boxes: It’s personality-driven – a mom-and-pop place – and run by people enthusiastic about sharing their love of good cooking. It’s a low-rent location, with lots of locals. The menu is small because they’re selling everything they’re cooking. It’s in one language, Italian, because they cater to locals rather than tourists. And it’s handwritten because it’s shaped by what’s fresh in the market today. I tell her, “We have fine Italian restaurants in America, but even the finest cannot create the energy and ambiance that comes with simply being in Italy.”

Cincia then takes control, telling me to put away my notepad and stop being a travel writer. She says, “Only a tourist would rush a grappa or pull the fat off the prosciutto. Tonight, we eat with no notes. We eat my way.” Reviewing the options, she pours me another drink and suggests that I totally relax. Then she turns to the chef and says simply, “*Mi faccia felice*” (“Make me happy”).

He does. And that night, along with enjoying a great meal, I added a new favorite word to my Italian vocabulary: *indimenticabile* (unforgettable).

*Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours. This article was adapted from his new book, **For the Love of Europe**. You can email Rick at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.*

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Welcome to the Dairy Market Food Hall in Charlottesville

By Annie Tobey

The new elevated market concept with a diversity of local independent vendors



Welcome to the first in our series of new Charlottesville highlights. We begin with a look at the Dairy Market Food Hall in Charlottesville.

History and nostalgia set the stage for the new Dairy Market, but epicurean impulses are satisfied today.

The building originally housed Monticello Dairy, beginning in the 1930s, where milk, cheese, and ice cream were processed and packaged. The business sold some of its products right there on site, including ice cream, making memories for Charlottesville residents of the time. Although the building has housed other businesses in the years since Monticello Dairy moved, this concept will undoubtedly have long-term staying power.

Today's Dairy Market is an exalted food court – no mall necessary – and you, too, will be singing its praises once you visit. In fact, big box stores would detract from the purity of the place. The market hall has about 18 merchant stalls (some still in build-out), including specialty retail, a restaurant, and a brewery. Each food stall features a different cuisine, for a medley of flavors.

The market space is open and airy, with a sleek vibe complemented by exposed brick, and a sprinkling of Holstein allusions. Step in the front door to be greeted by a two-story court of glistening white tiles and black accents, and windows flooding the room with natural light.

Though take-out is always an option, the vibe, the tables (inside and out), and the guest Wi-Fi invite you to sit a spell, to enjoy your food and drink while they're fresh. When I visited, nine stalls were serving customers. Highlights of my visit included:

The Milkman's Bar



Picture a drugstore soda fountain ... that grew up. The milk bottle lighting hints at the bar's creativity and its nod to nostalgia – as does the menu. Think The Big Tickle bourbon Egg Cream or a non-alcoholic Egg Cream; the Regal Beagle, a spin on a Harvey Wallbanger; Milkman's Gamble, a Gibson riff; and others, with and without alcohol. Playful presentations add to the appeal. The Regal Beagle, pictured here, is garnished with Galliano Caviar. The Lucille is chilled with an ice sphere filled with strawberry balsamic shrub (a "Lucille ball," you might say).

Look for daily featured cocktails, barrel-aged cocktails, and cocktails using ingredients from the other businesses. Ask for recommendations to pair your drink with foods from other Dairy Market vendors.

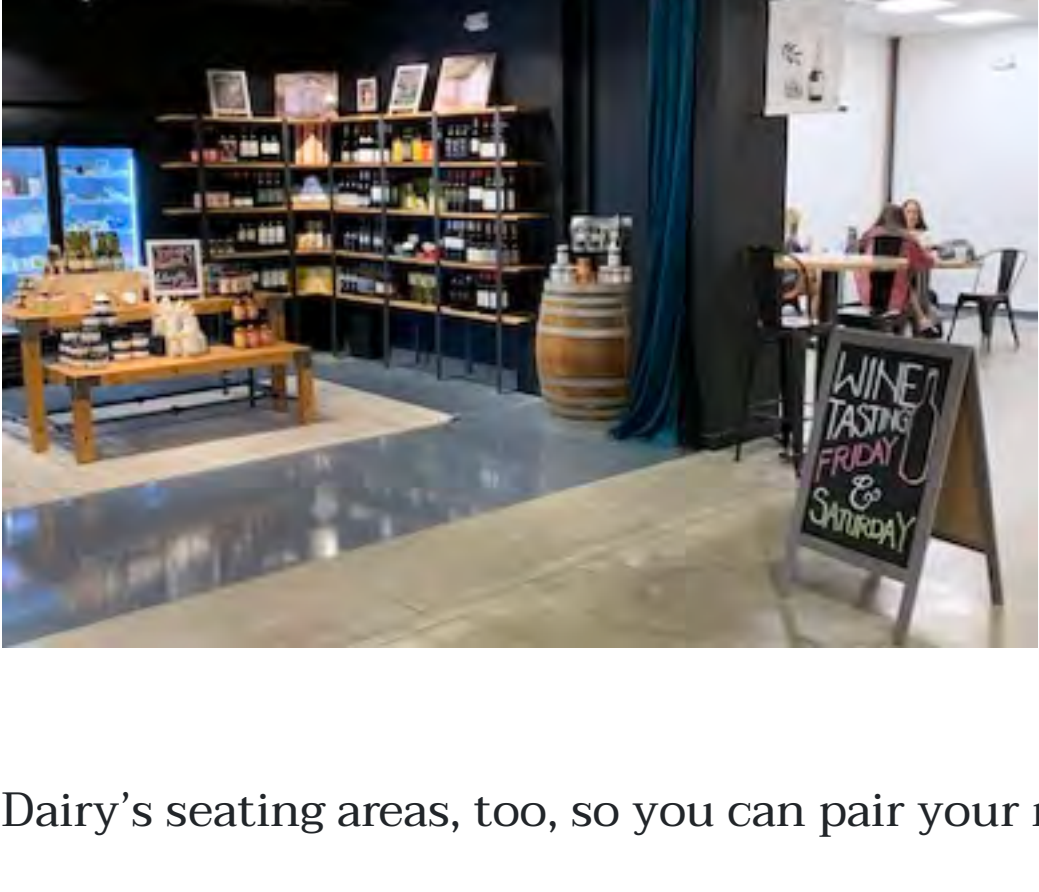
When I learned that the bar shares parentage with Charlottesville's The Bebedero restaurant (part of Ten Course Hospitality), I knew I'd love it. I was right.

Bee Conscious Baking Co.

Talk about local! The couple behind this bakery, Alexis and Patrick Strasser, grow many of the ingredients for these scrumptious baked goods on their farm. What they don't grow, they try to source locally. The name reflects their attention to sustainability, including the importance of pollinators. And while the company's mission brings warm feelings to your soul, Alexis' baked goods bring pleasure to your palate and a smile to your face. Macarons, cupcakes, cake pops, cakes, galettes with seasonal fruits, cinnamon donuts, a delicious protein ball to reward yourself after a workout, a dirt cup for the kids ... oh, and fresh farm produce and free-range eggs available, too!



Springhouse Sundries



The smallish space belies a carefully curated selection of specialty foods – both nonperishables and perishables such as cheese and charcuterie – wines, ciders, and beers. Beers, for example, include familiar but hard-to-find beers like Saison Dupont, LaChouffe, Hacker Pschorr, Hitachino Nest, and Schlenkerla. I spotted numerous familiar Virginia food brands (including AR's Hot Southern Honey, which just so happened to be on my grocery list) and took home some new ones (Bloody Brilliant Bloody Mary mix and The Little Things shortbread salted rosemary cookies, both of which suddenly appeared on my grocery list ... delicious!).

Food and alcohol from Springhouse can be taken into the Dairy's seating areas, too, so you can pair your meal with wine or beer.

Starr Hill Brewing. satellite location

Talk about a blend of the past and present! Starr Hill, the second-oldest craft brewery in Virginia, began in a Charlottesville music hall before moving its brewing operations to nearby Crozet. After opening satellite locations in Roanoke, Richmond, and Lynchburg (with one on the way in Tyson's), the brewery has come home to C'ville. Well, a "vacation home," so to speak.

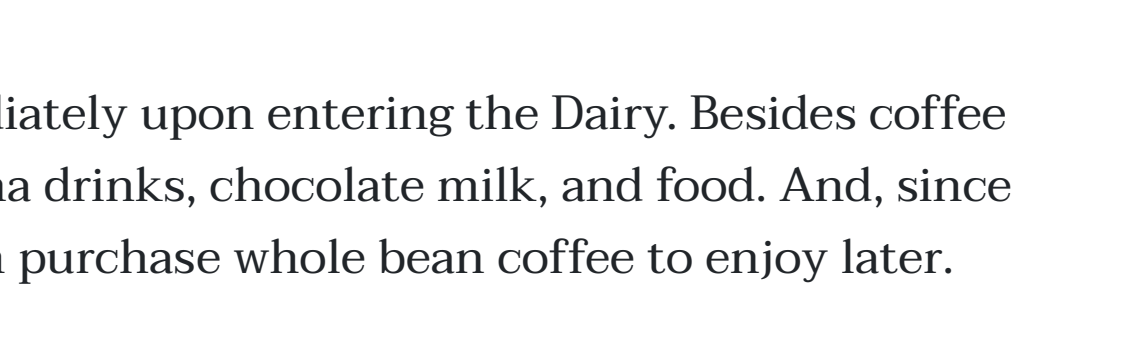
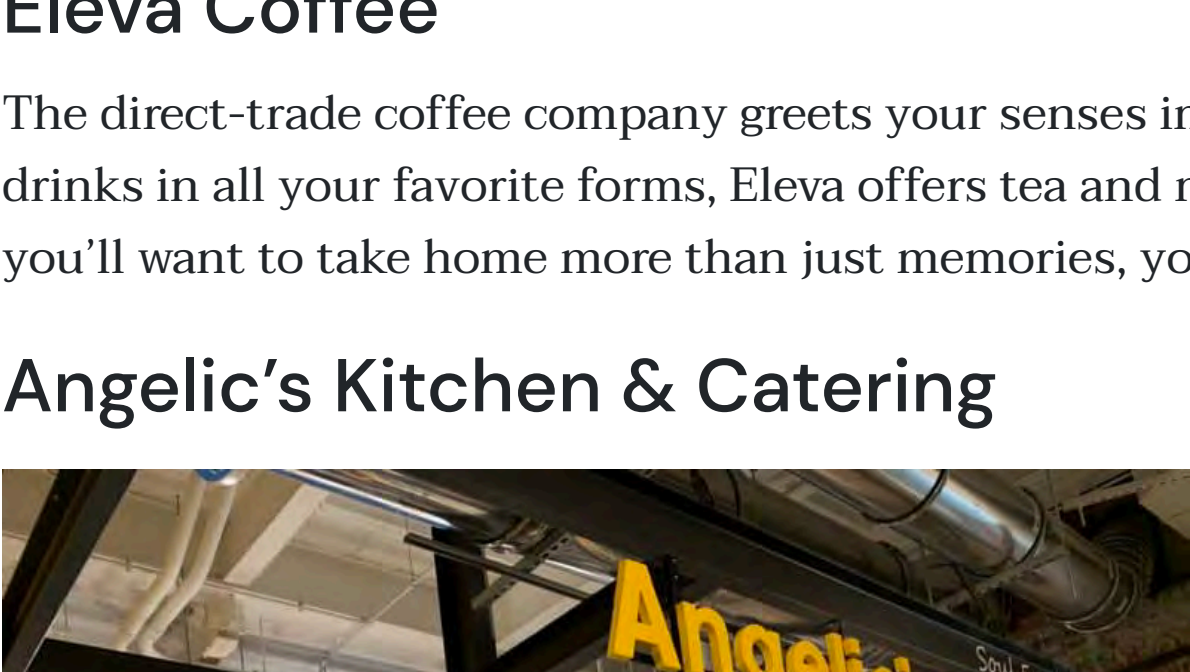
Starr Hill produces classic styles such as Vienna lager, wheat, and doppelbock, trendy styles like seltzer, fruited gose, and double-dry-hopped New England-style IPA, plus creative riffs such as toasted marshmallow double chocolate stout and fruited IPA.

The brewery has a generous tasting room and patio seating. Rather than brewing on a smaller system, the satellite space will receive wort from the Crozet facility to be finished at the Dairy. "We have open-top fermenters that we will be doing some wild fermentations and fruit fermentations before putting it in stainless or barrels," Starr Hill brewmaster Robbie O'Cain told me.

Eleva Coffee

The direct-trade coffee company greets your senses immediately upon entering the Dairy. Besides coffee drinks in all your favorite forms, Eleva offers tea and matcha drinks, chocolate milk, and food. And, since you'll want to take home more than just memories, you can purchase whole bean coffee to enjoy later.

Angelic's Kitchen & Catering



Angelic brings the soul to the Dairy – traditional Southern soul food, that is. And Angelic Jenkins knows how to cook it up right! She has operated a food truck and catering business for years. She even packages her signature bread for retail.

The fried fish is a must-try (OK, or the fried or barbecued chicken, the shrimp, or the wings), along with a plethora of sides: macaroni and cheese, collard greens, candied yams, sweet cornbread, pinto beans, and more.

Moo Thru

Of course, the Dairy Market must have an ice cream shop! Moo Thru originally opened in

Remington, Virginia, in 2010, as an offshoot of a dairy farm. Moo Thru ice cream has been so popular that the business has since expanded to other locations – including The Dairy. The hand-churned, hand-dipped ice cream comes in more than a dozen delicious flavors. As if choosing among the flavors isn't tough enough, you can also opt for shakes, malts, and sundaes. The business is still family owned, with the fourth generation still milking the cows and the fifth generation making the ice cream.

And then there's ...

Each of the diverse food stalls called my name as I strolled by, like sirens signaling using delightful scents wafting through the air. Regrettably, I didn't have the capacity to sample them all. And several have opened up in the few weeks since, with more poised to open. All of which gives me an excuse to return. And when I do, I'll be visiting:

Chimm St., highlighting authentic Southeast Asian street food. Charlottesville restaurateur Jay Pun takes his experience at Chimm Asian restaurant and Thai Cuisine and Noodle House, both also in Charlottesville.

Dino's Wood-Fired Pizza & Rotisserie Chicken (plus salads, wraps, and apps, gluten-free and vegan options), a delicious new concept from chef Dino Hoxhaj.

Manila Street, with dishes crafted by Chef Fernando Dizon, a Filipino native, using recipes handed down in his family for generations.

Take It Away, a name familiar to the local community, features sandwiches made from all-natural meats and cheeses, veggies, and freshly baked bread, using the signature house dressing.

Latest merchants to join Dairy Market Food Hall in Charlottesville

South & Central Latin Grill & Steakhouse (opening June 1) will be fueled by a wood-fired masonry cooking hearth to present Argentinian, Brazilian, and Mexican cuisine, with lots of grilled meats, seafood, and more. Plus a Latin-influenced cocktail program.

Citizen Burger Stand (opening June 1) proves that you can enjoy American favorite foods while still expecting the best. Virginia restaurateur Andy McClure believes in using unprocessed food, 100% grass-fed beef, and free-range chicken.

GRN Burger (opening June 1) offers a 100% vegetarian menu – burgers, chick'n sandwiches and nuggets, and other American favorites.

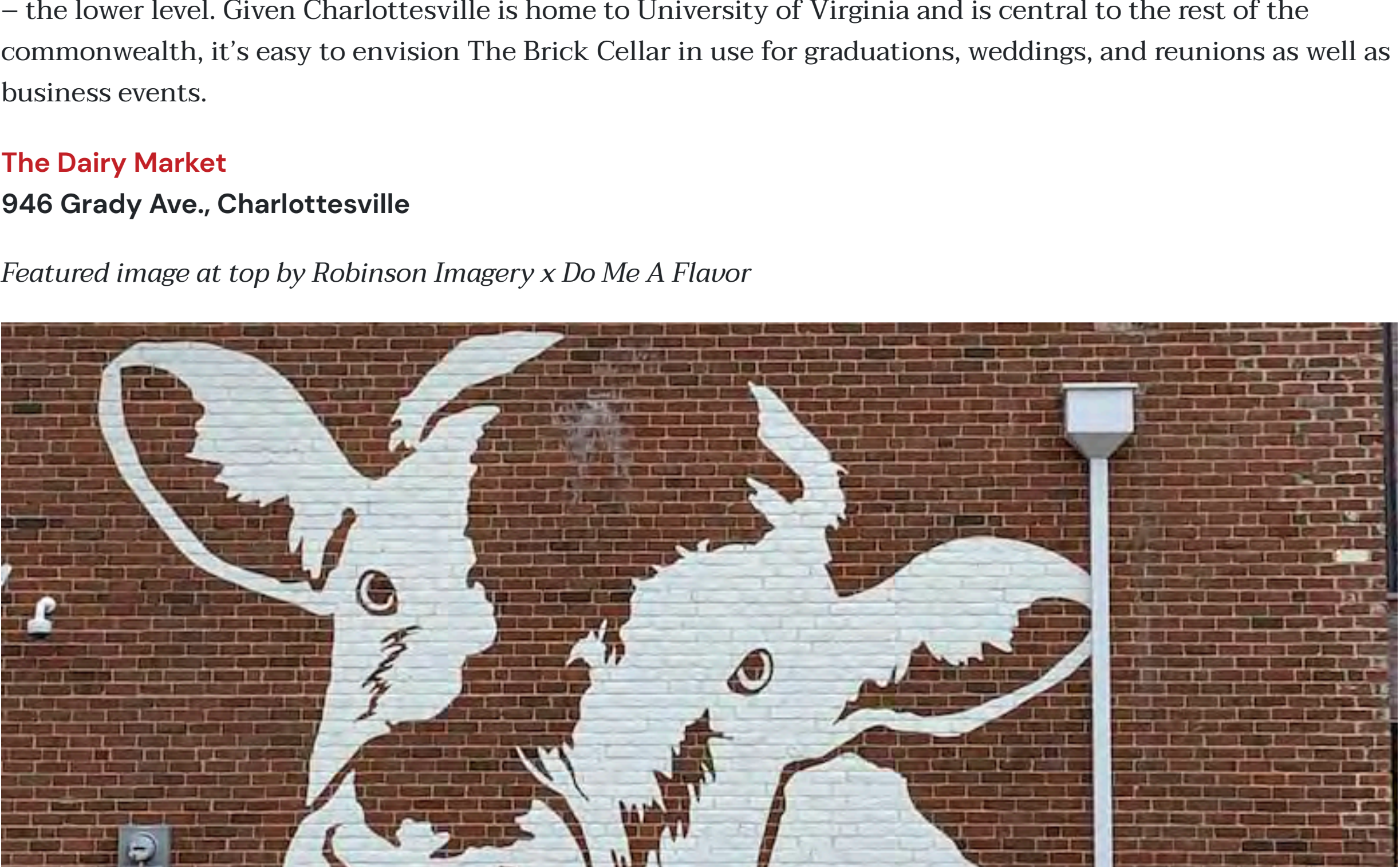
Mashu Festival (opening June 1) presents Asian festival food, which is, fortunately, nothing like American fair food. Executive Chef TK Chin will demonstrate his experience with Japanese cuisine and fresh traditional ingredients.

Quattro Tizi (opening mid-June) sells urban contemporary men and women's clothing and accessories, complemented with décor, furniture, and art – and focused on sustainability.

The Dairy Market building also houses a 6,000-square-foot event space, called The Brick Cellar, in – wait for it – the lower level. Given Charlottesville is home to University of Virginia and is central to the rest of the commonwealth, it's easy to envision The Brick Cellar in use for graduations, weddings, and reunions as well as business events.

The Dairy Market
946 Grady Ave., Charlottesville

Featured image at top by Robinson Imagery x Do Me A Flavor



The Wool Factory – Historic venue, contemporary culinary gem

By Annie Tobey
Home to Selvedge Brewing, The Workshop, and Broadcloth



The setting is impressive, a sturdy but neat and trim historic textile factory. This remarkable restored complex of buildings houses three businesses under one branded umbrella: The Wool Factory. Each business caters to customer palates in its own distinct way: the Selvedge Brewing brewpub, The Workshop coffee and wine shop, and Broadcloth restaurant. Residents of Charlottesville have a new local culinary hangout, and visitors can happily add The Wool Factory to their Charlottesville itinerary.

The setting

To get to this renovated delight, you wind your way through a historic Charlottesville working-class neighborhood. You arrive at a complex of industrial buildings, which was home to Charlottesville Woolen Mills, founded in 1868. Most of the surviving mill buildings standing today were built in 1920s to 1930s. The factory produced a variety of wool textiles, from fabrics for uniforms and work clothes to cashmeres.

The surrounding village and neighborhood grew along with the mill. Housing was added over the decades in a variety of architectural styles, dating back as far as 1847, including Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, Craftsman Bungalow, and Cape Cods.

The mill closed in 1962. Today, the large redbrick buildings and black trim still exude an industrial vibe, but the generous windows lighten that vibe as surely they lighten the interior. The complex sits beside the Rivanna River Trail along Moore’s Creek, just up from where the creek meets the Rivanna River – no coincidence, given the value of water to early industry. The creek and woods across the waterway contribute an idyllic air to the setting.

The three businesses that make up The Wool Factory sit at the eastern end of the complex.

The complex simplicity

The welcome mat at The Wool Factory is a neat, spacious courtyard. The yard is bounded by the glass-and-brick textile mill building and two smaller complementary peninsulas. An elevated covered walkway to nowhere adds character and speaks to the buildings’ history. Ample seating invites visitors to come in and sit a spell.

Selvedge Brewing at The Wool Factory



Seating at the Selvedge Brewing brewpub

brewhouse brews just enough beer for the brewpub (or crowler fills to take home).

The menu is crafted by executive chef Tucker Yoder, who oversees the menu at Broadcloth as well. Yoder presents delicious elevated pub food – locally sourced ingredients crafted into bar-friendly food, with thoughtful vegetarian options. Think burgers made with local beef, smoked local mushroom tacos, hot dogs from Autumn Olive Farms, and wings, plus roasted eggplant, braised pork, salads, desserts, and more.

As a full-service restaurant, Selvedge serves wine and cocktails as well as beer, mocktails, craft sodas, and other non-alcoholic treats.

The high ceiling, open rafters, and plentiful windows complement the industrial vibe of the tasting room restaurant. While the windows illuminate the space by day, bright white ceilings accentuate the lighting after dusk. Window tables beside Moore’s Creek offer views the waterway, occasional wildlife, and the foot and bike traffic along the trail.

The Workshop

Across the courtyard from Selvedge sits a small boutique wine and coffee shop, dubbed The Workshop.

Coffee at The Workshop comes from local roaster Grit Coffee. Freshly baked breads and pastries come from Cou Cou Rachou, a Charlottesville bakery headed by The Wool Factory’s executive pastry chef, Rachel De Jong.

To differentiate itself and offer special somethings to its customers, The Workshop stocks a distinctive selection of wines. These include local winemakers’ passion projects – such as Blanc de Blancs, produced in Virginia by renowned winemaker, Claude Thibaut – and some international favorites. In consultation with Joy Ting, independent Virginia winemaker and enologist, The Workshop plans to produce its own small batch wines.

Broadcloth



Broadcloth restaurant blends industrial chic, retro-craftsman, and elegance.

Virginia graduation weekend included five appetizers: seared scallops with minted peas, lemon thyme, and lamb bacon; duck liver mousse tart in a Ritz cracker crust with bread-and-butter pickled ramps and miso beer mustard; plus a seasonal vegetable salad, chilled asparagus velouté, and caramelized maitake with gnocchi and kale. Entrées included ribeye, seared steelhead, poached halibut, roasted duck breast, and a vegetarian option featuring cabbage, quinoa, and smoked tofu.

Desserts for that weekend were pistachio dacquoise with strawberries and honeysuckle ice cream, chocolate pot de crème, and vanilla ice cream with butter roasted strawberries. (De Jong can even make vanilla ice cream into something distinctively elegant!)

The fine stitching

As of this writing, Selvedge Brewing and Broadcloth are both reservation-only.

The symbiotic relationship among the businesses at The Wool Factory is a plus for customers. Customers can grab a beer from Selvedge and coffee and/or a bottle of wine from The Workshop and enjoy them all in the courtyard. (Seating in the courtyard is first come, first serve, though reservations are required under the outdoor tent). Diners at Selvedge can even order a bottle of wine from The Workshop.

The Wool Factory also includes event spaces and can host up to 570 guests.

So whether it’s just you or you with a group, big or small, swing by the historic mills to enjoy a treat for your eyes as well as your mouth.

The Wool Factory

1837 Broadway St., Charlottesville, Virginia

The Bob Marley Cocktail

By Annie Tobey

Let this refreshing Rastafarian-colored cocktail take you to the islands



What better way to fight cabin fever than to transport your soul to Jamaica and begin making plans for a trip to the tropics? The Bob Marley cocktail offers just such a tasty respite.

The Bob Marley *From Sunset at the Palms*

Frozen strawberries

Mango juice, frozen, divided

Frozen mango juice mixed with Blue Curacao to get a green color

1 ounce of Appleton White Rum (made locally – and you can visit the distillery when you're on the island)

Pineapple and cherry, for garnish

Blend strawberries and pour them into a tall Collins or highball glass as the bottom layer for this drink. Pour frozen mango juice as a second layer. Mix remaining frozen mango juice with

a little Blue Curacao until you have a greenish frozen slush. Pour on as the top layer of the drink, leaving room for rum. Pour the rum gently on top and garnish with pineapple and cherry ... and now you have a liquid Rastafari flag!

If you wonder about the measurements, remember what the Jamaicans say: “You know, just what feels right to you.”

Sunset at the Palms is an adults-only, all-inclusive, treehouse-style resort in Negril, Jamaica.

Recipe and image from Mindy Bianca PR.

Recipe: Philly Cheese Steak Soup



Whether you’re a fan of the Philadelphia Eagles, or you just like Philly cheese steak: this is the soup for you.

Prep time: 20 min | Cook time: 20 min

- 3/4 cup butter
- 1 (8 ounce) package sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 white onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 6 cups milk
- 1 (10.5 ounce) can beef consomme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 (8 ounce) package provolone cheese, diced
- 3/4 pound sliced roast beef, chopped

-
1. Melt butter in a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium heat; cook and stir mushrooms, onion, and bell pepper in the hot pot until tender, about 5 minutes. Add flour and continue to cook and stir until flour is golden, about 5 minutes more.
 2. Gradually whisk milk into vegetable mixture and bring to a simmer. Cook until thickened, stirring often, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add beef consomme; season soup with salt and pepper. Slowly stir provolone cheese into soup until cheese is melted, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in roast beef.

Recipe from *AllRecipes.com*.

Recipe: North African–Style Grilled Salmon



The sun is out and the grill is just begging to be dusted off and smothered in meat. That’s its job, after all.

So we thought this would be the perfect time to provide you all with this grilled salmon recipe from the **Char-Broil Great Book of Grilling**. Guaranteed to keep your dinner guests satisfied and your grill fulfilled.

Prep time: 30 min | Serves: 4

- 4 salmon steaks or fillets (4 to 6 ounces each), fresh, thawed, or frozen
- 1 4-ounce jar green olives, drained and sliced
- 3/4 cup low-fat plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive or canola oil 1 teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
- 2 tablespoons slivered red onion

Reserve 2 tablespoons of the olives. Blend remaining olives, y ogurt, parsley, cilantro, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, paprika, cumin, turmeric, salt, and pepper flakes; set aside. Rinse any ice glaze from frozen salmon under cold water, and pat dry with a paper towel. Preheat grill to medium-high. Coat a heavy skillet with oil, and place on grill to preheat. Brush both sides of salmon with oil. Place salmon in heated skillet, and cook, uncovered, about 3 to

4 minutes, until browned. Turn salmon over, and sprinkle with lemon pepper. Cover pan tightly, and reduce heat to medium. Cook an additional 6 to 8 minutes for frozen salmon; 3 to 4 minutes for fresh or thawed fish. To serve, spoon sauce over each salmon portion, and sprinkle with reserved olives and slivered.

Recipe: Espinacas con Garbanzos (Spinach with Chickpeas!)

Brought to you by America's Test Kitchen



Espinacas con garbanzos is a hyper-regional dish native to Seville with strong Moorish influence that’s substantive and full of flavor.

Briefly simmering canned chickpeas (uniformly tender, well seasoned and convenient) in a combination of chicken broth and chickpea canning liquid tenderized them and infused them with savory flavor.

A picada (a paste of garlic and bread cooked in plenty of olive oil) thickened and seasoned the sauce. Smoked paprika and Moorish spices such as cumin, cinnamon and saffron imbued the picada with heady aromas, and tomatoes and vinegar boosted its tang.

Thawed frozen chopped spinach was perfect here; already fine and tender, it dispersed beautifully throughout the dish and provided plenty of surface area to hold the juices in place.

Espinacas con Garbanzos (Andalusian Spinach and Chickpeas)

Serves 4 as a main dish

- 1 loaf crusty bread
- 2 (15-ounce) cans chickpeas (1 can drained, 1 can undrained)
- 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 small pinch saffron
- 2 small plum tomatoes, halved lengthwise, flesh shredded on large holes of box grater and skins discarded
- 4 teaspoons sherry vinegar, plus extra for seasoning
- 10 ounces frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry

1. Cut a 1 1/2-ounce piece from loaf of bread (thickness will vary depending on the size of the loaf) and tear into 1-inch pieces. Process in a food processor until finely ground (you should have 3/4 cup crumbs). Combine chickpeas and broth in a large saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Adjust heat to maintain simmer and cook until the level of liquid is just below the top layer of chickpeas, about 10 minutes.

2. While chickpeas cook, heat 1/4 cup oil in a 10-inch nonstick or carbon-steel skillet over medium heat until just shimmering. Add bread crumbs and cook, stirring frequently, until deep golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic, paprika, cumin, salt, cinnamon, cayenne and saffron and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes and vinegar; remove from heat.

3. Stir bread mixture and spinach into chickpeas. Continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is thick and stew-like, 5 to 10 minutes longer. Off heat, stir in the remaining 2 tablespoons oil. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Season with salt and extra vinegar to taste. Transfer to a serving bowl and serve with remaining bread.

Recipe notes: For a vegan version, substitute vegetable broth or water for the chicken broth. If using chickpeas that you’ve cooked from dried, use 3 1/3 cups of cooked chickpeas and 2/3 cup of the cooking liquid. Use a fruity, spicy, high-quality olive oil here. Red wine vinegar can be substituted for the sherry vinegar.

For 25 years, confident cooks in the know have relied on America’s Test Kitchen for rigorously tested recipes developed by professional test cooks and vetted by 60,000 at-home recipe testers. See more online at www.americastestkitchen.com/TCA.

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Recipe: Tangy Key Lime Bars

Brought to you by America's Test Kitchen!



Key limes are smaller, yellower cousins to the bigger, darker green Persian limes you usually see in the grocery store. They’re more tart, with fragrant, floral juice and used to be grown widely in the Florida Keys, where cooks invented key lime pie (and key lime bars like these) as a way to use the juice.

To make these key lime bars, you don’t actually need key limes. They can be hard to find and are so small that you’d have to squeeze 20 of them to get 1/3 cup of juice! Regular Persian limes work just fine; but whatever you do, don’t use bottled lime juice in this recipe (fresh juice has much better flavor!).

Then there’s toasted coconut. It’s a great addition to baked goods such as cookies, bars or as a topping for ice cream or oatmeal. It can sometimes burn when you toast it in the oven, so we like to use the microwave, where you can keep a close eye on it as it cooks.

Key Lime Bars

Makes 16 bars

For the crust:

- Vegetable oil spray
- 5 whole graham crackers, broken into pieces (or 3/4 cup store-bought graham cracker crumbs)
- 1/3 cup (1 2/3 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup (1 3/4 ounces) sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

For the filling:

- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/4 cup (2 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon grated lime zest plus 1/2 cup juice (zested and squeezed from 4 limes)
- 1 large egg yolk
- Pinch salt
- 1/2 cup (1 1/2 ounces) sweetened shredded coconut, toasted, optional
- Whipped cream, optional

- 1. For the crust:** Adjust the oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 325 degrees. Make an aluminum foil sling for an 8-inch square metal baking pan. Spray foil with vegetable oil spray.
- 2. Add cracker pieces,** flour, sugar and 1/8 teaspoon salt to food processor. Pulse until crackers are broken into small pieces, about five 1-second pulses.
- 3. Process until crackers are finely ground,** about 30 seconds. Add melted butter and pulse until butter is combined with crumbs, about 10 1 second pulses.
- 4. Remove the lid and processor blade.** Use a rubber spatula to scrape the crumb mixture into a foil-lined baking pan.
- 5. Press crumbs into an even layer** covering on the bottom of the baking pan, then use the bottom of a dry measuring cup to press crumbs firmly into the pan until very flat.
- 6. Place the baking pan in the oven.** Bake until the crust begins to brown at the edges, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer to a cooling rack and let the crust cool for at least 15 minutes. (Do not turn off oven.)
- 7. For the filling:** Meanwhile, in large bowl, whisk condensed milk, softened cream cheese, lime zest and juice, egg yolk and a pinch of salt until well combined and smooth.
- 8. Pour the filling evenly over cooled crust.** Spread the filling into an even layer to the corners of the pan and smooth the top. Transfer to the oven and bake until the filling is set and no longer jiggles when the pan is shaken gently, 15 to 20 minutes.
- 9. Remove from the oven** and let the bars cool in the pan and on the wire rack for 2 hours. Cover the baking pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate until the bars are chilled and firm, at least 2 hours or up to two days.
- 10. Remove the bars from the refrigerator and remove the plastic.** Use foil to lift the bars out of the baking pan and transfer to a cutting board. Cut into squares. Top squares with toasted coconut or whipped cream (if using) and serve.

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Finding the Courage to Start – Again

Part 1

By Rev. Dr. Brenda Walker

A four-part series on older adults starting new careers



Over the past year, I have been among the many older adults considering or pursuing a new career trajectory in the midst of Covid-19. As the pandemic unfolded, I found myself in a state of hypervigilant doomscrolling, hunkered down at home. Yet, the crucible of sustained solitude and contemplation turned out to be fortuitous, prompting me to face my fear and uncertainty about starting over after a career of nearly four decades.

It helped to know I wasn’t alone. Stanford professors Bill Burnett and Dave Evans pointed out, “In the U.S. alone, 31 million people between the ages of 44 and 70 want what is often called an ‘encore’ career – work that combines personal meaning, continued income and social impact,” as reported in their best-selling book, *Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life*.

Even in the best of times, fear and uncertainty accompany any career transition. For my Finding the Courage to Start series, I consulted entrepreneurs, authors, and counselors who offered advice on how anyone can summon their courage and embark on a new journey, successfully.



herself looking at a second career as a therapist. “After not being in college for 30 years, my first doubt was, ‘Can I do graduate school?’ Then came other doubts, ‘Will I be good at being a therapist? Will I enjoy the work of being a therapist?’”

Build a matrix of support.

When de Coriolis needed to summon her courage, she drew on her network of support and intentionally fortified her internal resources. “To deal with uncertainty and doubt, talk it out with trusted people, gather information about the requirements of the career (and of the requirements of the schooling if schooling is required). I talked to friends, to people I knew already who are therapists, to a student in grad school about my age, and to my therapist.”

Test options before taking a leap.

King Schuller advises research, conversation, and testing. “Spend time in areas of your interests; that way you can visualize yourself as part of that career. This might look like taking a class or two (it’s acceptable to quit the class if it is not exciting), spending time with a person or group in that profession, or actually jumping in and taking a risk so your direction can be tested in real time.” I tested the waters by attending one writing class. I was hooked.

De Coriolis researched her second career through service. “I found a volunteer activity, the local crisis line, which although was not the same as being a therapist, it gave me more confidence in my direction.” She completed a master of arts degree in clinical mental health counseling from Antioch University, Seattle, and now, in her 70s, she runs a mental health practice in Redmond, Washington.

“Look at your resources to carry you through school and the possible lean times early in your new career,” she advises. “Then, feel the fear and do it anyway.”

Discomfort and anxiety are our companions during any courageous undertaking, but with supportive friends and new acquaintances in our field of interest we can test the waters and thrive.

Despite all its challenges, a second career is worth the risks for millions of people. As King Schuller ended our interview, “Engage and enjoy the journey!”

In my next installment of Finding the Courage to Start, I’ll share advice from inventor Jeffrey Nash that helped him launch his first product from idea to over a million sales and Alma Katsu, who transitioned from a career as an intelligence analyst to an award-winning novelist and television producer.

The portraits

Paulette de Coriolis, MA, LMHCA is a mental health counselor specializing in serving transgender people. She is a volunteer facilitator at the Ingersoll Gender Center’s drop-in support group and a volunteer phone worker at the Crisis Clinic. She retired from a career as an engineer, then completed a master of arts degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Antioch University Seattle and runs a mental health practice in Redmond, Washington.

Carroll King Schuller, CCM, owner of Organic Blueprints, Inc. is a business, career management, and life coach for fast-thinking adults.

Finding the Courage to Start – Again

Part 2

By Rev. Dr. Brenda Walker

A four-part series on older adults starting new careers



When I hear “pursue your passion in retirement,” I imagine happy couples kayaking, relaxing on a cruise ship, sipping wine with friends. It’s not that easy. Even as we deal with what life might throw at us – health issues, financial challenges, loss of a parent, loss of a partner, children at a distance, children close by, no children – we have the hurdle of what’s happening inside our own heads. Uncertainty, self-doubt, and fear accompany every transition, and after almost four decades of experience in my field, along with the accompanying degrees, titles, and confidence, assuming the role of a novice amplified those reactions.

To help us overcome the mental and emotional hurdles that could block pursuit of an encore career, I spoke with experts in job transitions. In this second installment of my Finding the Courage to Start series, inventor Jeffrey Nash and award-winning novelist Alma Katsu share three techniques that launched their second-career success.



After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps and three decades as a clothing salesman, Jeffrey Nash invented the Juppy, a baby walker that allows adults to assist children learning to walk without straining their backs. His moment of inspiration came as he watched his grandchild play soccer; nearby, a parent hunched over to clasp her child’s hands as the toddler took tentative steps. The idea was born. However, Nash had never invented anything.

Break challenges into manageable steps.

“At times I felt inadequate and not capable of overcoming the challenges ahead,” Nash confides. “What got me through it was taking time out and meditating, and then coming to the realization that I had to sometimes take small bites to get the job done.”

Breaking challenges into manageable steps enabled Nash to achieve his dream. He designed a prototype, contracted manufacturers, and built a company to produce his invention. He is now CEO of Juppy, which has sold over a million baby walkers.

Establish a network that inspires you.

Nash offers valuable insight for staying the course: “The fear and uncertainty that one has when deciding to make a career transition is understandable. What I did to help me stay fierce and committed to my goal was to every day saturate my mind with reading and listening to motivational speakers that inspired me. They would provide me with hope, because they seemed to know precisely what I was experiencing at the time.”

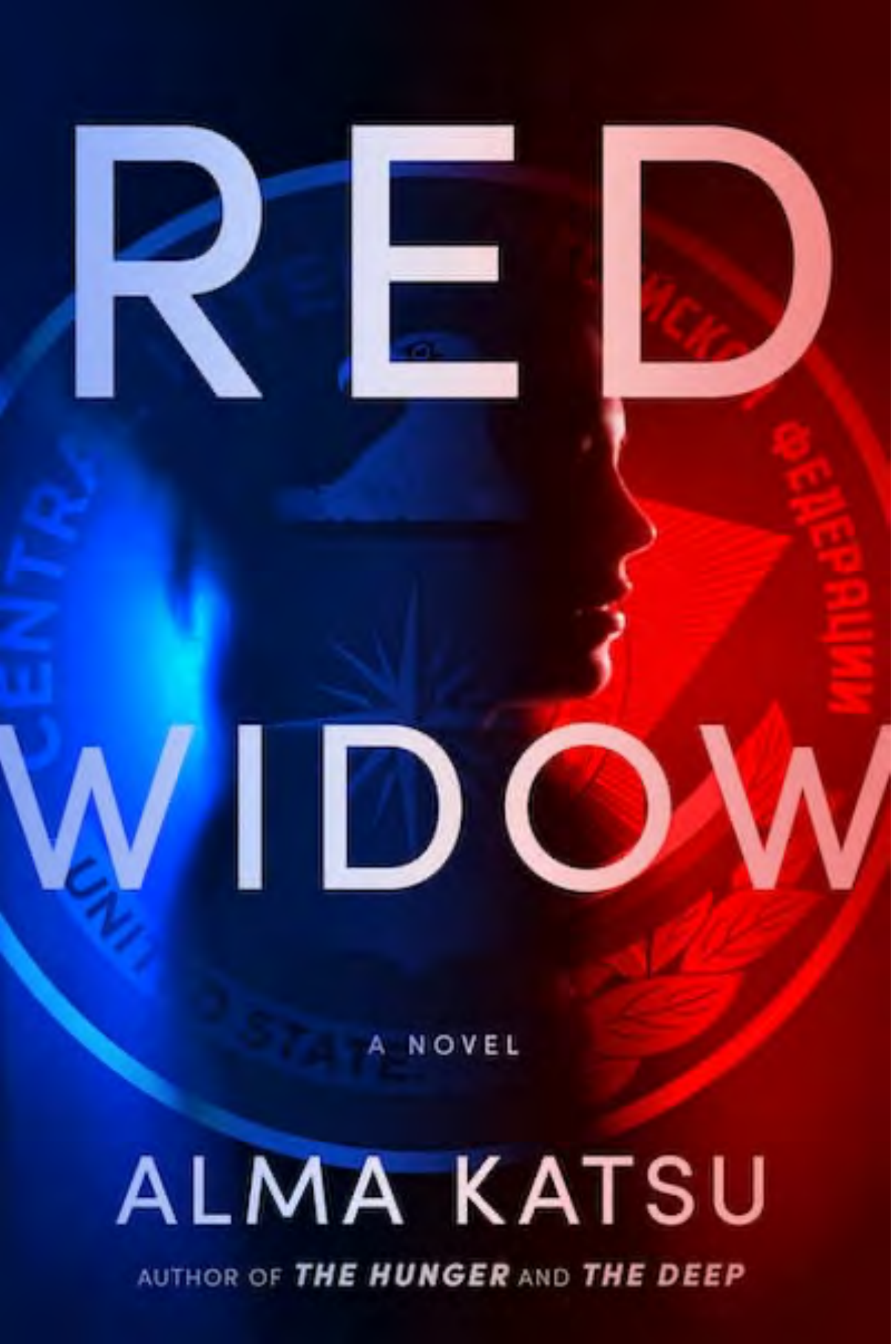
Hope can quiet our negative inner chatter and resist the voices that would convince us to abandon our paths. Nash emphasizes that the messages that surround us have a real impact on our outcome. “I was very diligent when it came to not allowing naysayers anywhere in my sphere.”

Alma Katsu, who sold her first novel at age 50 while still working full-time as an intelligence analyst, also believes it is important to have a supportive peer group. “Put yourself in the best possible position to succeed. Talk to people in the business, see if you can convince one or two to mentor you, and grow a network in the field.”

As I’ve worked toward publication of my memoir, I’ve learned that publishing isn’t a field for the faint of heart, a sentiment Katsu shares. “Getting your first book published is really tough. The hardest part is, probably, feeling like you have no control. Either an agent or publisher likes your book or he/she doesn’t. When it’s rejected, you often get absolutely no feedback whatsoever. And you go into it knowing that most people will never get an offer for their book.”

Set the right goal, one that is within your control and can grow with you.

When going into a career filled with uncertainty, Katsu says that taking control of what you can brings a measure of confidence. “Make sure you have the right goal. When I returned to writing fiction, getting published was not my goal. Getting a contract from a publisher is not something you can control. My goal was to learn how to write a great novel. Learning, and working to get better, is something you can control. It’s also never-ending: I’m constantly trying to learn how to do it better from other writers.” Katsu’s focus on writing a great book has served her well; her six novels have won numerous awards and her most recent, *Red Widow*, was named a *New York Times* Editors’ Choice.



“Make sure your goals are realistic,” she advises. “Develop a plan that has reasonable milestones, including setting new goals as your encore career progresses.” Advice Ms. Katsu has followed herself: at the age of 61 she’s about to embark on her third career as an executive producer for a TV series based on *Red Widow*.

We will inevitably feel inadequate and be subjected to naysayers along the way, but by focusing on manageable steps and connecting with those who inspire us, we can clarify a goal that is realistic, grows with us, and is tied to our own actions and values.

In my next installment of Finding the Courage to Start, I’ll share advice from Elaine Kiziah, a psychologist turned life coach and founder of Joybook, and Bonnie Miller, Licensed Professional Counselor at The BrownMiller Group, a career counseling firm.

The profiles of those providing tips for starting again

Alma Katsu sold her first novel at age 50 while still working full-time as an intelligence analyst. Her six novels have won numerous awards and her most recent, Red Widow, was named a New York Times Editors’ Choice. At the age of 61 she’s about to embark on her third career as an executive producer for a TV series based on Red Widow. Visit her website, AlmaKatsuBooks.com.

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps and three decades as a clothing salesman, Jeffrey Nash invented the Juppy, a baby walker that allows adults to assist children learning to walk without straining their backs. He is now CEO of Juppy, which has sold over a million baby walkers. Learn more about the Juppy at TheJuppy.com.

Finding the Courage to Start – Again

Part 3

By Rev. Dr. Brenda Walker

A four-part series on older adults starting new careers



In 2018, I retired from my role as pastor at Three Chopt Presbyterian in Richmond, Virginia, to care for my father. He passed away three weeks before my final sermon. I was devastated, adrift in my grief, having lost both parents within eight months of each other. I had also left the only professional role I had ever known. I was 59 and had served in ministry for 40 years, starting on weekends during my first year of college. I was overwhelmed by the transition ahead. I needed professional fulfillment from a new career; yet fear, uncertainty, and self-doubt raged inside me.

Knowing this experience is common among those of us with encore careers, I turn to career counselors for their advice. “It is normal to have these emotions when you are starting something new,” Bonnie Miller says. She is a licensed professional counselor at The BrownMiller Group, a career counseling firm. “The key is not to wait for them to go away but to understand that you can manage them so that you will feel less overwhelmed.”

Elaine Kiziah earned her Ph.D. in psychology, then turned her attention to counseling, career coaching, and consulting on ways to work effectively on projects that are fulfilling. “Fear is often a sign that what you’re doing matters to you – which is good! But these kinds of feelings can be overwhelming when they’re just swirling around in our heads.”

Get the fear out of our head and onto the page.



Kiziah is also the founder of Joybook, an online learning community for people who want to use journaling to live a better life. “Taking time to write the feelings down can make them more manageable – and also allows you to see them with a bit more perspective. I recommend making a list of fears or questions that are coming up for you, then reading through your list and inviting your ‘Wise Self’ to respond – offering you advice and encouragement.”

Ms. Kiziah’s guidance resonates with my experience. While I was desperate to find my professional footing, I sought direction through journaling. When I was in the 7th grade, my study hall teacher, Ms. Charlton, looked over her round, gold-rimmed glasses at us from her desk, the dusty blackboard stretched across the wall behind her back. She held up a small bound notebook and bellowed, “Get yourself a diary and start writing in it every day. You will never regret it.” That day, Nov. 18, 1971, I started journaling and have continued the practice for almost 50 years.

In the early days of my career transition, I explored my identity by the simple exercise of jotting “I am,” then finishing the sentence with everything I could think of to write down. I am “a retired pastor.” Eventually, I wrote, “I, Brenda, am a writer,” claiming the identity I had held within since I was 8 years old.

Kiziah used journaling to guide her own career transition. “I’ve made some pretty significant changes with my work over the past five years – to bring it in better alignment with who I am and what I love most.

“Journaling helped in four main ways:

1. Listening more closely to myself so I can get clear on how I feel about things.
2. Learning from my highs and lows with my work – for instance, analyzing peak experiences (times when I felt happy, fulfilled, and at my best) to uncover the key ingredients.
3. Dreaming about ways to bring more of those ingredients into my work and life.
4. And when the journey gets hard, it’s how I troubleshoot, encourage myself, and remind myself of why it all matters.”

Gain clarity through action.

“I often talk to my clients about the clarifying value of action and warn them against making premature decisions without enough information,” Miller shares. “For example, you don’t have to decide today – just by thinking about it – whether you want to change jobs or even change careers. All you need to decide is whether you want to apply for a job. If you do apply and if you are lucky enough to get an interview, you’ll have learned so much more! You’ll know who you will be working with and for, what it looks like, what it feels like, how much money you’ll make, what benefits might be available to you, and how you’ll spend your days. Then, and really only then, will you be in a good place to assess the risk.”

I first explored becoming a published author by attending the James River Writers Conference. I was nervous, sweating under my armpits while navigating the convention center. I’d been to more church conferences than anyone should attend in one lifetime, but this was an unfamiliar environment, a gathering of writers with expertise, some with multiple books to their names. A familiar social awkwardness came over me. I was 13 again, fearing the cool kids would have nothing to do with me. Furthermore, I was still adjusting to having one usable eye due to a retinal detachment two years prior. In new spaces my depth perception and sense of space were off and I was prone to bumping into the person on my right in crowded spaces. It was disorienting. But I made it through the day. I learned the risks and the opportunities in publishing. That small action of showing up to learn, despite the obstacles, launched my encore career.



“Take the edge off your fear by telling yourself that if, with more information, it doesn’t seem worth the risk, you’ll not do it,” Miller advises. “But perhaps you owe it to yourself to at least find out.”

Take small steps.

Ms. Miller reminds us that small steps aren’t just for reflection and discernment. “It is always helpful to frame whatever action you take in terms of the smallest steps possible, because large leaps will increase your anxiety, as well they should. The next step is not to change careers; it is merely going online to look at what’s available. Or researching opportunities for training in an area of interest. Or updating your résumé.”

While at the James River Writers Conference, I discovered my next small step. I bought *The Halfway House for Writers* by Valley Haggard, and through it I learned about classes at Life in 10 Minutes. In the classroom space on Cary Street, I began the free writes that would eventually become my memoir. The class structure naturally broke the writing process into manageable chunks.

For those who must discover their own process, Miller advises taking one day at a time. “A good rule of thumb is to have your ‘to-do list’ include things that are so small that they can be accomplished in a day.”

Day by day, we build our futures.

In my final installment of Finding the Courage to Start, I’ll share advice from three second-career authors whose work is featured in the Spring edition of *Virginia Writers Club Journal*.

The portraits in starting again with journaling and action

Elaine Kiziah is a psychologist turned life coach and the founder of Joybook, an online learning community for people who want to use journaling to live a better life.

Bonnie Miller is Licensed Professional Counselor at The BrownMiller Group, a career counseling firm.

Finding the Courage to Start – Again

Part 4

By Rev. Dr. Brenda Walker | June 30th, 2021

A four-part series on older adults starting new careers



I'm one of the 80% of Americans who want to write a book. When I retired in 2018, I resumed the writing career I had begun when I was 8 years old, alone in my bedroom, pencils in a row, a stack of paper on my toy box; I would stick a pencil in each of the three holes of my notebook paper, one by one, to line them up. A writing career felt simpler then, fewer doubts came between me and the lined pages.

For the fourth part of my series Finding the Courage to Start, I spoke with Stanley B. Trice, George Vercessi, and Paulette Whitehurst, all authors featured in the Spring 2021 edition of the *Virginia Writers Club Journal*, about their process from long-burning passion to words on a page.

Filter the messages you receive from yourself and others.

"Writing was something I always wanted to do, and it always came back to me, even though I never told anyone," Stanley B. Trice says. "Writing helped me through a lot of life circumstances, like an old friend. In my 40s, I had enough of hiding it. I had stories to tell, and I had hope that someone would read them."

Trice spent years riding the Virginia Railway Express to the Pentagon to work on defense budgets. To keep his sanity during the hour and a half commute home, he wrote short stories, typing away on his laptop or, if seating was full, perched on the stairs with a notebook balanced on his knee.



A few years ago, he escaped the long commute and politics to write. At 65, he published the young adult science fiction *High School Rocket Science (For Extraterrestrial Use Only)*. He has also authored dozens of short stories.

Like many aspiring writers, Trice was frequently dissuaded from his art. "I made the mistake of letting people discourage me from writing from when I was in elementary school until my 40s, when I learned to stop listening to people. I realized then that I could be living in the latter half of my life (80 was old when I was 40, now at 60 it is not that old)."

All those years of heeding naysayers impacted his own beliefs. "My second emotional hurdle was lacking confidence in myself," he confides. "I am also my worst enemy, but once I ignored myself it was like stepping into sunshine and I want to continue and continue."

To counter the negative voices, he seeks out positive people. If sympathetic ears are unavailable in your personal circle, he advises expanding your reference group. "If you have no people to talk to, listen to podcasts and people who are encouraging. Everyone has the ability to

be better than what others tell them they could be. I wish my future self had told my past self to ignore everyone who told me 'no' and pursue my writing. Everything has risks, and each person should not worry that it could be a solo journey."

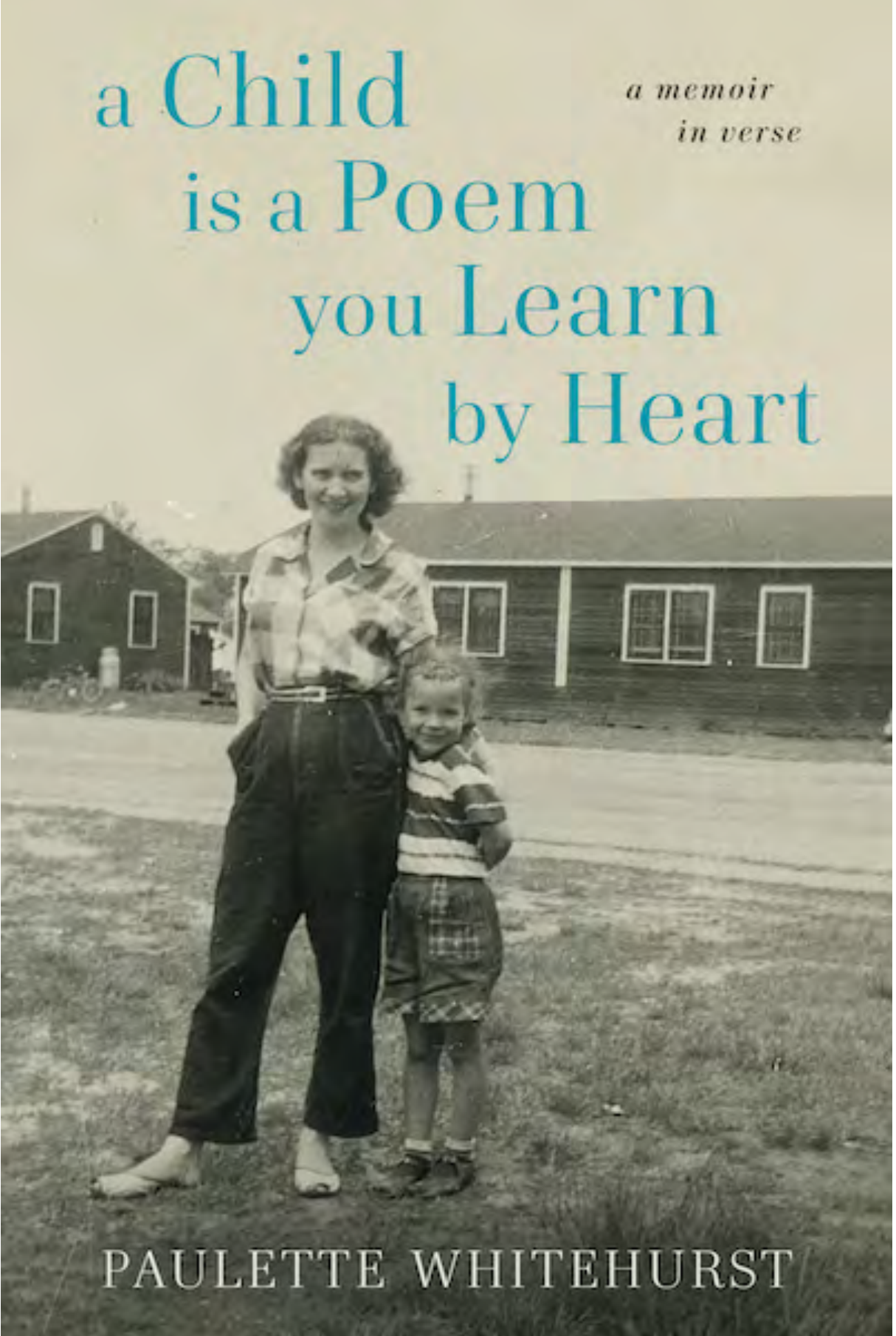
The uneasiness might never cease, but Mr. Trice reminds us that anxiety is no reason to abandon your work. "Courage is always elusive. I am always chasing the courage to keep going. I keep chasing."

Persistence, patience, and perseverance are key.

Paulette Whitehurst is an expert at the chase. Her career evolution has been characterized by "persistence, patience, and perseverance," a mantra that has kept her going on a multi-decade journey. "I have been a late bloomer my whole life," she says. "I earned my bachelor's degree at age 34, my master's degree at age 59." She studied for her bachelor's degree from VCU by attending night classes while she continued to work as a deputy clerk in the juvenile court system in Richmond.

"They would have called me a career-switcher, but in truth I don't see it that way at all." Her calling was teaching, and the years she spent before achieving the goal were in service to it. "My goal to be a teacher wasn't reached until I was 34, but I never gave up. My goal to write a book didn't happen until I was 73. Now I have achieved that goal – and I am working on my next book!"

Whitehurst frames her debut, *A Child Is A Poem You Learn By Heart: A Memoir in Verse*, not as a new career, but rather a new phase of a lifelong calling. "Teaching was always my career. I still see it that way. I am retired from the classroom now, but I am still teaching and learning every day. I help my daughter with homeschooling my twin grandchildren."

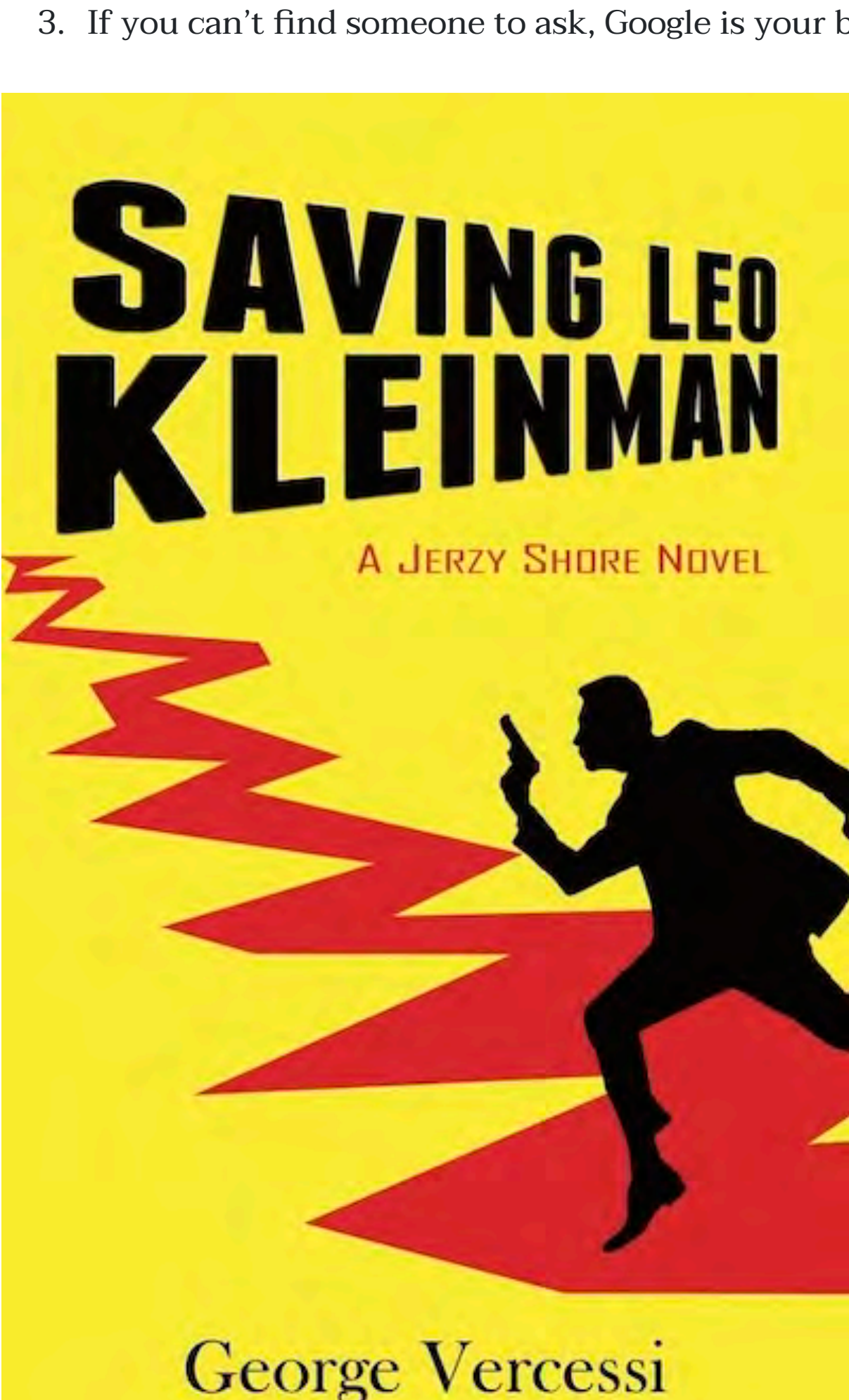


Realizing that authorial ambition can be one facet of a continuing call allowed me to combine my second act with the decades of service as a pastor that had come before. Today my memoir is part of a larger project to assist churches and faith communities in becoming informed advocates that provide safe spaces for transgender people and their loved ones.

Be wise in perseverance.

Despite her clarity and expertise as a teacher, Ms. Whitehurst had to rely on her adaptability to see her book in print. "Although I could not get an agent or a publisher, I didn't give up." She attended a workshop in self-publishing taught by Richmond author Karen Chase. "[Chase] said three things that I kept repeating to myself whenever I started to get overwhelmed. I think this advice would be helpful to anyone starting a new endeavor:

1. Take it one step at a time.
2. If you don't know how to do something, ask someone.
3. If you can't find someone to ask, Google is your best friend."



"For me, learning to write stories was not an easy task," George Vercessi shares. His writing career came after his last assignment as a captain in the U.S. Navy, where he held the post of Chief of Public Information for NATO's southern European command, headquartered in Naples, Italy. He doggedly immersed himself in the writing craft by attending conferences and workshops, subscribing to publications for writers, taking video courses, and joining writers groups to exchange feedback on work. He, too, emphasizes knowing when to turn to credible resources online. "In addition to the many reference books and articles I consume on various subjects relating to each story, I rely upon the easily accessible information available on the internet. This time-saving tool allows me to continue writing without much interruption."

Turning to experts, engaging with fellow aspiring writers, and making use of resources to hone his craft paid off. He is now the author of several novels, a nonfiction guide for authors wishing to self-publish, short stories for adults and children, and magazine articles. He also developed and co-produced the MGM/Showtime drama *The Silver Strand*.

Part of Vercessi's wisdom is knowing when a project is not working. "At one point, I tried

writing a play, but that didn't go well and I put it aside." A second career opens up the opportunity for experimentation and, as with any design prototype, the freedom to learn, adapt, and pivot instead of becoming entrenched in actions that don't yield results.

Knowing that there are so many people out there who want to embark on a second career can give us hope. We are not alone; there are others walking with us and footsteps we can follow. Each one of us has a story to share with the world. By filtering external messages as well as our own internal chatter, honoring our inner wisdom, and breathing in a spirit of calm, we will persevere and triumph.

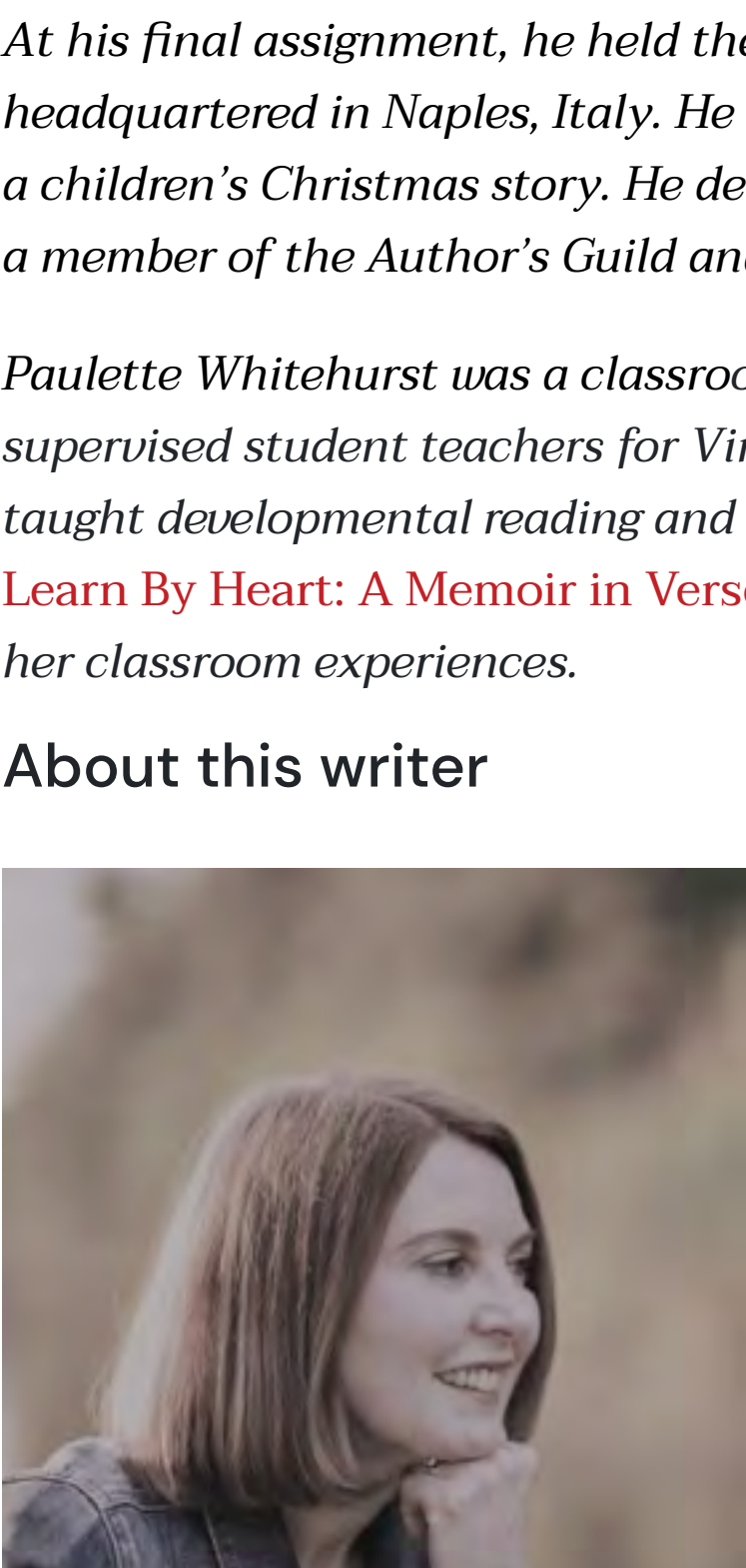
The portraits of starting again as a writer

Stanley B. Trice is the author of the young adult science fiction High School Rocket Science (For Extraterrestrial Use Only) and dozens of short stories. His next release is Evidence of a Commuter Train, a series of twenty stories with drama, comedy, and adventure, about people connecting with their fellow commuters by what happens on the train. Find him at stanleybtrice.com.

George Vercessi was born and raised in New York City, and retired from the U.S. Navy with the grade of captain. At his final assignment, he held the post of Chief of Public Information for NATO's southern European command, headquartered in Naples, Italy. He is the author of several novels, a guide for authors wishing to self-publish, and a children's Christmas story. He developed and co-produced the MGM/Showtime drama The Silver Strand. He is a member of the Author's Guild and the National Press Club.

Paulette Whitehurst was a classroom teacher for more than 30 years, teaching grades 4-8. During retirement, she supervised student teachers for Virginia Commonwealth University, mentored and coached new teachers and taught developmental reading and writing at John Tyler Community College. She wrote A Child Is A Poem You Learn By Heart: A Memoir in Verse, and is now working on her second memoir, also written in free verse about her classroom experiences.

About this writer



Rev. Dr. Brenda Walker is the author of the forthcoming Martine: A Memoir, which tells of her transformation into a trans ally as she discovers that her oldest sibling, who died in 1982 under mysterious circumstances, was transgender. Share your thoughts on second careers or connect with Brenda through her website, PastorBrendaWalker.com.

You can read Rev. Walker's original contribution to Boomer, her moving and inspirational personal story of retiring to care for her aging father, and of being suddenly thrust into her second act career at his sudden death.

Do you have dreams of starting again – as a writer?

Perhaps you simply have childhood memories or other stories you would like to share with our baby boomer audience. View our **writers' guidelines** and e-mail our editor at **Annie@BoomerMagazine.com**

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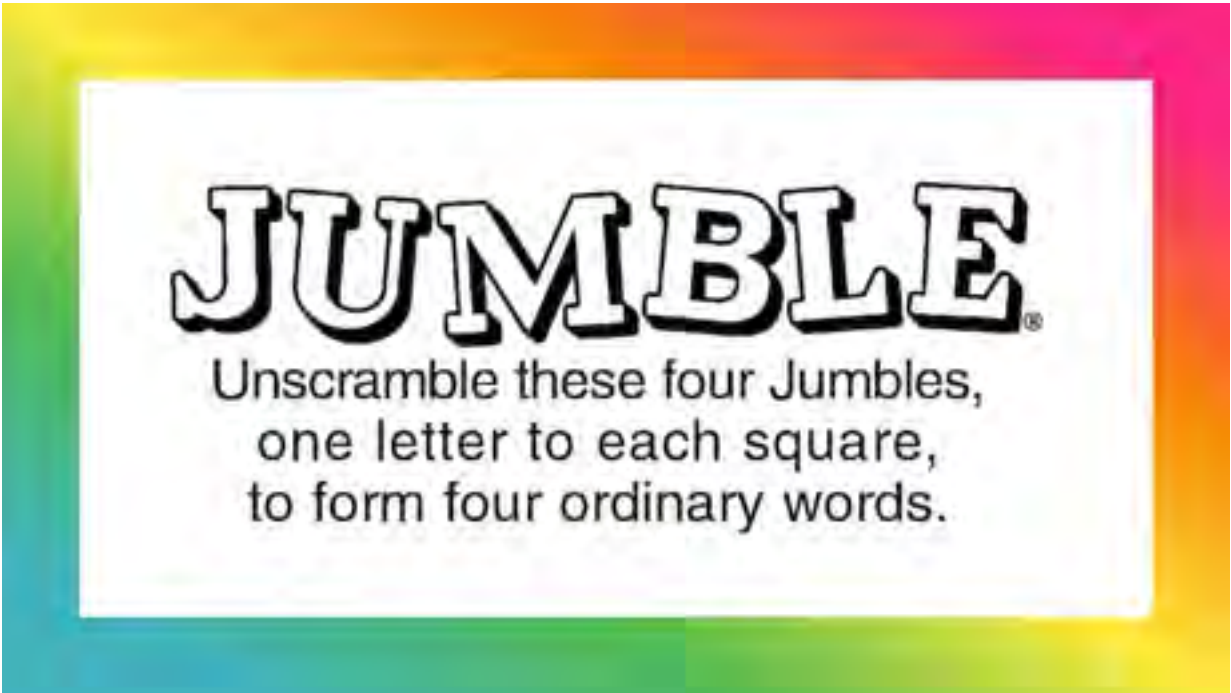
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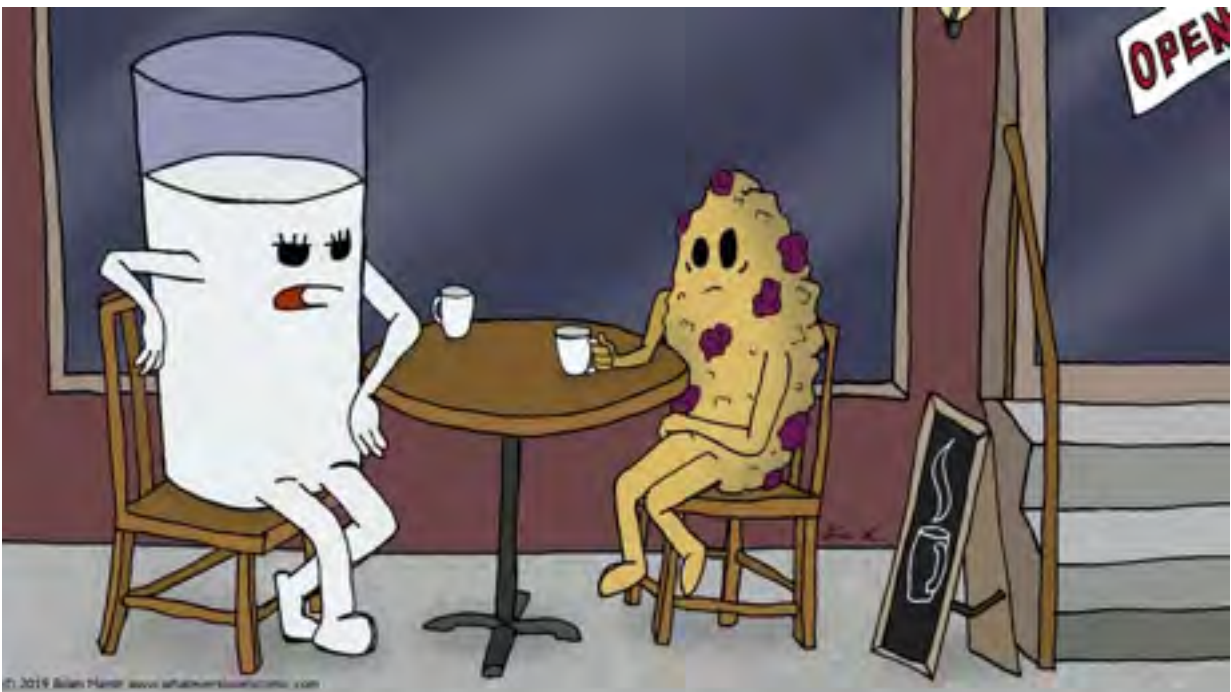
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